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ABSTRACT

A monograph to encourage the teaching of the English language is presented. This work is directed primarily to the high school English teacher. It contains six chapters. Chapter One, The Subject and the high school teacher of English, describes, among other things, three ways to get at the inclusiveness of the English language. Chapter Two, Bringing the History of English into the Classroom, concerns itself with answering the question of why the teacher should concern himself with the transfer of his knowledge of the history of English into the classroom. Chapter Three, Content and Technique for the Classroom, Content and Technique for the Classroom, defines language briefly as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols which men communicate with. Chapter Four, Structuring a Unit on the History of English, emphasizes that a teacher should create his own unit. Chapter Five, The History of the English Language and Literature, discusses the relationship between language and literature. Chapter Six, For the Teacher and the Future, emphasizes that the teacher should constantly be building a body of language material. (Author/CK)

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TEACHING THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

Joseph E. Milosh, Jr.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The triquetra, a figure composed of a circle (symbolizing the movement of a rolling wheel) and three curved lines radiating from a pivotal axis, is frequently found in ancient art. As a representation of forward motion emanating from a central point it is an apt representation of progressive secondary school English programs which emanate from an awareness of the History of the English Language.

NCTE/ERIC Studies in the Teaching of English

TEACHING THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

Knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.

–Samuel Johnson

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NCTE/ERIC Studies in the Teaching of English

TEACHING THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

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FOREWORD TO THE SERIES

The National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD–formerly the Bureau of Research) of the United States Office of Education has in recent years considerably expanded its support to basic and applied research in education. It has also made possible and encouraged the dissemination of findings and conclusions. As the body of information derived from research has expanded, however, so has the gap between research and classroom teaching. Recognizing this problem, NCERD has charged ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) to go beyond its initial function of gathering, evaluating, indexing, and disseminating information to a significant new service: information analysis and synthesis.

The ERIC system has already made available–through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service–much informative data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of specific educational research are to be intelligible to teachers and applicable to teaching, considerable bodies of data must be reevaluated, focused, translated, and molded into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports readily accessible, NCERD has now directed the separate ERIC Clearinghouses to commission from recognized authorities state-of-the-art papers in specific areas.

Each state-of-the-art paper focuses on a concrete educational need. The paper attempts a comprehensive treatment and qualitative assessment of the published and unpublished material on the topic. The author reviews relevant research, curriculum trends, teaching materials, the judgments of recognized experts in the field, reports and findings from various national committees and commissions. In his analysis he tries to answer the question "Where are we?"; sometimes finds order in

apparently disparate approaches; often points in new directions. The knowledge contained in a state-of-the-art paper is a necessary foundation for reviewing existing curricula and planning new beginnings.

NCTE/ERIC, with direction and major substantive assistance from its Advisory Committee, has identified a number of timely and important problem areas in the teaching of English and has commissioned state-of-the-art papers from knowledgeable members of the profession. It is hoped that this series of papers, each subject to review by the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on Publications, will provide a place to stand. The next step is the lever.

Bernard O'Donnell
Director, NCTE/ERIC

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NCTE/ERIC Studies in the Teaching of English

TEACHING THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

INTRODUCTION

The suggestion that the history of the English language be taught in the schools is not new. As early as 1919 the *English Journal* published an article advocating the teaching of several aspects of the English language, including language history.[1] But the suggestion seems not to have been taken up by a great number of high schools, if one can judge from the paucity–and type–of materials available as well as from a general sense of what teachers are doing these days. It is unfortunately true that "the application of the history of English to the teaching of English is largely unexplored," as one curriculum guide noted in 1968.[2]

There are probably several reasons for the situation. The demands on classroom time by other important, traditional facets of the study of English are so great that many teachers no doubt hesitate to introduce what appears to be a new and very different body of material. The weakness or indeed the entire lack of preparation in the subject is surely another factor limiting some teachers' experimentation with the history of English. The mystery of the unknown may incite a few, but it deters many more. The expanding definition of English studies and the relative position and importance of language study, and specifically the history of the language within that definition, pose problems. Different textbooks, curriculum guides, and authorities divide or allot time so differently that it is the very teacher who keeps up with his professional reading who often becomes frustrated. Finally, relating the history of English to other parts of language study and to literature and composition and so integrating it in a true sense remains a challenge. Robert F. Hogan has observed perceptively enough that "we have so far failed to distinguish how language scholarship, in its broadest terms, should inform our teaching as opposed to adding information to the curriculum, the content of what we teach."[3]

The purpose of this monograph is to encourage the teaching of the history of the English language, in part by dealing with some of the reasons which have worked against the effective use of the subject.

The work is directed primarily to the high school English teacher who wants to know about the potential of a large and important body of material in his classroom. Such a teacher may have taken a graduate or undergraduate course in the history of English and never recognized how to incorporate his knowledge of this subject into his own teaching, or without any formal training in linguistics he may have hit on certain interesting facets of the history of the language in his personal or professional reading and wanted to know more. For him the monograph presents various reasons why the history of the language might be taught, surveys representative materials worked out by linguists, curriculum planners, and teachers, and makes suggestions for his own experiments.

But what follows is itself in no sense a curriculum guide, nor is it a handbook of preplanned lessons which the teacher can present mechanically and with guaranteed success. Rather, the monograph is an argument that in the high school greater attention can be given to the history of the language with significant results, an argument illustrated and I hope strengthened—within the confines of this series—by a sort of guided tour of appropriate content, resources, and techniques. Despite the detail gathered here and there to focus on particularly rich topics, the work is never definitive, only suggestive. My own analyses and applications are meant to provide a base for the classroom teacher's own experimentation with new material, with new techniques for content both new and old, and with more active student observation and conclusion.

Along the way I am particularly concerned with the inductive method. Much from the history of the language lends itself nicely to student synthesis, with the result that details teach and reinforce larger principles. But since the real burden of adaptation for a particular class always remains with the teacher, I must hope that he will consider developing his own approaches as he reads. Strategies for handling certain materials inductively are usually far more effective when they are modified by a teacher's own reading, experience, and knowledge of particular students. If with the history of English the teacher can create a new awareness of the language by students, manifested in a new concern for the medium of what they hear or read, he will have succeeded. Concurrent with a new awareness will be an increasing delight in language as it reflects society and as it contributes to the art of literature. The student's rewards are his

perceptions and pleasures, growth coming from the teacher's constant nourishing of these until they become strong enough to maintain themselves.

While the monograph is addressed to the high school teacher, it perhaps has some use elsewhere. For the elementary school teacher the work can provide part of the view he should have of the kind of study his students are training for. Also, if the subject matter itself never enters the elementary teacher's classroom, the attitudinal changes which should stem from his knowledge of the subject and its implications might significantly affect his own performance as a teacher of the language arts. For example, I cannot imagine an enlightened elementary teacher's being duped into distressing his class by the author of the "Word Watching" column in *Scholastic News Trails.* Instead of attending seriously to this prescriptive pretender who refuses to look at his dictionary and so in 1970 can introduce the word *route* by "Say: ROOT,"[4] an elementary school teacher can have his class discuss variant pronunciations, dialect areas they are associated with, and the general question of usage.

For the college teacher of a course in the history of English, the work will at least suggest some of the problems his students will encounter if they want to use what he has taught them in their own classrooms. If he can help with solutions to these problems, so much the better.

How to Read the Monograph

The best way to sense the cumulative potential of the history of English in the classroom is to read the work through, of course. But since Time's winged chariot seems always about to run us over, I have tried to keep the following chapters relatively independent of each other, so that the teacher with little time can dip efficiently. But there is one provision. I would like to ask all readers to consider in the second chapter the various reasons for teaching the history of the language. I am simplifying—but not outrageously so—when I suggest that the failure of the history of the language to be exploited in the classroom results most often from the failure of many teachers to figure out why they are, or might be, teaching it.

Notes

(For complete bibilographic information, see Works Cited.)

1. Betty Gawthrop, "1911-1929," *An Examination of the Attitudes of the NCTE toward Language*, ed. McDavid, p. 11.
2. *English Language Arts in Wisconsin*, p. 302.
3. Robert F. Hogan, "Postscript: The Future," *English Education Today*, ed. Josephs and Steinberg, p. 715.
4. *Scholastic News Trails* (May 11, 1970), p. 4.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SUBJECT AND THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER OF ENGLISH

The Subject

Depending on which language arts texts he examines, what linguist he reads most, or what instructor he had for his college course in the history of the language and perhaps English methods, an English teacher may have one of many diverse concepts of the history of English. But the teacher's particular concept will really not be in conflict with others. Rather, it will be part of a legitimate diversity permitted by the very richness of the subject.

The history of the language is a complexity which itself is based on a series of complexities. The study of a given language at a given moment is called a "synchronic" study. A synchronic study can be as complex as language is in all of its aspects, including sound, structure, and meaning. If several synchronic studies of the same language but at different times are set side by side, one has the basis for a "diachronic" study, or a study of language change. Whether one particularizes or generalizes about language change, he is talking about the history of the language.

A description of the subject from a recently revised college textbook on the history of English reads this way:

> . . . the history of a language is chiefly the record of the practical everyday speech of successive generations. Every person who speaks or writes a language, who hands on from one speaker to another any of the traditions of the language is, to that degree, a factor in the historical growth of the language. And the whole history of the language is made up of the sum of the individual acts of all those who in past times have used the language in response to the

> immediate practical needs of life. Just as politics is history in the making, so present, everyday speech and writing is the history of the language in the making.[1]

What is important in this description is first that it stresses the "grass roots" element as a force in shaping a language, the cumulative effect of innumerable utterances by millions of people speaking as individuals. Second, the description stresses that the history goes on; that at the moment I write this sentence or the moment a teacher speaks with a student, a force–immeasurably slight, to be sure, but nonetheless a reality–is exerted in the development of English. The value of stressing people as a past and present force in language growth is that we can dispel some of the notion of death and irrelevance students often associate with the word *history*.

A third way to get some sense of the inclusiveness of the history of English is to consider what language itself is. A definition of language fairly representative of what we find in textbooks is this: "Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols which men communicate with." The essence of language is in the word "system," for without an accepted system there would be no basis for communication between individuals. Utterances which are meaningful because they are made and understood at the literal level against a commonly perceived background will become babble without this background. But because the system is "arbitrary," it can change. If enough people agree, consciously or unconsciously, that the commonly perceived background will now add this or drop that, or be altered in one way or another, we will have a systemic change. But because the force for and approval of such change of the arbitrary system rests with people, ultimately all that affects humanity affects language. So in its comprehensive sense, the history of the language is, like "the proper study of mankind," the study of man. The college textbooks for the history of English which include chapters on political, social, and cultural history are only one kind of evidence of this comprehensiveness.

In a narrower sense the history of English is often understood as a study of the changes in the language itself, with little and sometimes no regard for the external forces which may have caused, or factors which may have accompanied, these changes. Such a study will include, for example, an analysis of the reconstructed sounds of Old English, of the changes in sound patterns from Old English to Middle English, of further changes in sound patterns from Middle English to Modern English. The sound changes which occur between Old English and Modern English can be described in

various ways. On a simple phonetic level, one can observe that the word *house* was in Chaucer's day pronounced "hoos," rhyming with Modern English *goose*. On a more sophisticated level one can talk about a group of Middle English vowels which underwent a regular change as a group and so appear in Modern English in predictable forms. Or one can use the techniques and terminology of the modern grammarians to describe the change which a single Old English significantly distinctive sound underwent to become two significantly distinctive sounds in Modern English. In Old English "f" and "v" were not significantly distinctive sounds, but rather alternate pronunciations of a single distinctive sound. For the reader with some knowledge of linguistics, they were two allophones of the same phoneme. But a phonemic split occurred, and now the two sounds "f" and "v" are two distinctive sounds, signalling a difference between two otherwise identical words like *fan* and *van*.

The above examples suggest but really do not suffice to show that what is called the "internal" history of English can be described in its complexity with great detail and accuracy. Besides changes in sound patterns, the internal history of English will reveal changes in word formation, in grammatical patterns or syntax, and in word meanings. Again, changes may be talked about rather informally, or they may be described rigorously, perhaps by a transformational grammarian.

Linguists concerned with details of internal history will often give scant attention to details of external history in their research, and linguists concerned with external history and historians concerned mainly with the relation between language and culture will sometimes avoid describing details of internal history. But the high school teacher must be able to handle both internal and external history.

As a matter of fact, each complements the other. If a teacher is discussing the language of Chaucer and contrasting it to the language of *Beowulf*, he will be obliged to say something about the Romance vocabulary in Chaucer's English. Here an external political force, the Norman Conquest, has a fundamental importance, since it helps explain social and cultural developments leading to the influx of French words into English during the Middle English period. Or, to use a more current example, a linguist might study a ghetto dialect in Chicago, producing finally a description of the sounds, word forms, and syntactical patterns of the dialect. While such a synchronic study is complete in itself as a record of the language of a given place at a given moment, the study can become more interesting and less isolated if it is supplemented by a statement of the external history of

the community. If the field workers gathering information learn also that the informants (those supplying linguistic information) came from Appalachia twenty or thirty years ago, mainly to trade rural living and farming for city living and industrial work, they can begin to analyze the past forces and habits underlying present language habits. But such analyses are not limited to ghetto areas in cities, and should not be limited to linguists. A teacher in a Texas town should have a far better understanding of and more intelligent attitudes toward his students' speech if he knows that some years back a large number of Germans settled in the area. For him both internal and external history, in this case up-to-date and localized, should be an integral part of the study of language.

So the history of the English language is at once—yet without conflict—as general as man but as specialized as the study of the pronunciation of final "e" in Chaucer's English, as old as the ancestors of English but as immediate as what someone has said a second ago, the study of scholars but the product, whether conscious or unconscious, of us all. So there's plenty for everybody.

The History of English and the Teacher of English

The distinction between this chapter and the next rests upon the difference between what a teacher should know qua teacher and the actual content he introduces in his classroom. But for the history of the language, the distinction is largely theoretical. In reality, what a teacher knows about the history of English will affect his classroom attitudes and performance even if he chooses never to mention the subject as a subject. So despite the fact that the teacher himself is the concern of the next few pages, we are at the subject of the monograph: the history of English in the high school classroom.

There has been for many years and is now much agreement that the teacher of English should know the history of his language. Linguists, far before their work was as popular as it is today, provided a push for language study, a push many leading figures in English education decided to help with. The result was that a course in the history of English came to be a requirement in the programs for prospective teachers in many colleges and universities. But despite the growth of the history of the language as a

required subject for teachers and the now almost complete accord between linguists and educators that the subject matter is fundamentally important, there is still concern over the place of the subject in a prospective teacher's program. And the concern sometimes suggests a fear that all is not well.

Whatever their disagreements about method, program, and goal, the English and American participants in the Dartmouth Seminar could agree on the necessity of careful language study by the English teacher.[2] Part of the emphasis today on more intense preservice and inservice language training for teachers is of course directly connected with the increased work of structural and then transformational grammarians in the last two decades. Wisely, the necessity for teachers to be familiar with this work has been pressed. But part of the emphasis remains on the history of English as a subject still requiring further attention.

Near the conclusion of a recent article on bi-dialectalism, James Sledd writes that children

> should be taught the relations between group differences and speech differences, and the good and bad uses of speech differences by groups and by individuals. The teaching would require a more serious study of grammar, lexicography, dialectology, and linguistic history than our eductional system now provides—require it at least of prospective English teachers.[3]

The order is a large one, and it is significant that one of the tools for the teacher is language history. One should note that Sledd is thinking of language in broad, social terms, where the teacher's knowledge of the history of the language may help him work efficiently and yet never reveal itself as a body of knowledge.

More generally, John Searles in a report on the preparation of English teachers in Wisconsin noted that the committee set up to work out a statement "went on record as favoring a teacher education program which includes work in language history and structure," among other things.[4] The reported recommendation would seem to be typical of what most department chairmen and directors of programs in English education believe today. The report on *Project Grammar* of the Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers gives us both a statement of how the history of English fits into the whole of a teacher's knowledge of language and a survey of how people affecting teacher education think about a course in the history of English.

The chart below, taken from *Project Grammar*, was part of a preliminary statement of the qualifications a high school English teacher should possess.[5] "Knowledge of Language" was one of five areas treated.

Knowledge of Language

Minimal	Good	Superior
An understanding of how language functions	A detailed understanding of how language functions, including knowledge of the principles of semantics	Sufficient knowledge to illustrate richly and specifically the areas listed under "Good"
A reasonably detailed knowledge of one system of English grammar and a working familiarity with another system	A detailed knowledge of at least two systems of English grammar	
A knowledge of the present standards of educated usage: knowledge of the various levels of usage and how those levels are determined	A thorough knowledge of levels of usage; some knowledge of dialectology, a realization of the cultural implications of both	
	A knowledge of the history of the English language, with appropriate awareness of its phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes	

In the chart "Minimal" was not regarded as satisfactory but only as a starting point for progress. Under the heading "Good," the chart is valuable as an indicator of where the history of English fits into the range of knowledge about language a teacher should have. The chart's weakness lies in the fact that it does not, and as a chart it perhaps cannot, relate the basic material of the history of English to the other listings. In fact, a teacher's knowledge of the four categories under "Good" requires more than a "sufficient knowledge to illustrate" to become "Superior." It

requires a mental synthesis which permits the teacher to use freely whatever he knows from whatever category to help him understand what he does not know. So for the teacher the history of the language should be a source for understanding language in all of its aspects as well as an integral body of knowledge.

It is probably this understanding of the history of English in its larger sense, with its potential applications, that has caused the course to be historically the most frequently required language course for prospective teachers.[6] And interest in the course has not lagged, despite the growing stress on grammar. A recent poll asked professors of English to indicate for a number of language courses whether they thought the individual courses should be required, recommended, available, or omitted in the program for high school teachers. The sixteen courses included Old English, Modern English grammar, the philosophy of language, a course in English for the disadvantaged, a course in the history of English, and a course in the history of English specifically for secondary school teachers. The course in the history of English was required or recommended more times than any other course. Interestingly enough, the history of English got about forty percent more votes than a history of English course designed especially for future high school teachers.[7] This could mean that the respondents thought of the history of the language more as a basis for a teacher's own understanding than as a body of knowledge aimed directly at the high school classroom.

Another recent study (1968) suggests even more forcefully that the history of English remains an important concern. Three national juries, composed (1) of "authorities in the fields of English and professional education," (2) of "English coordinators and supervisors," and (3) of "outstanding English teachers on the secondary level" were asked to rate twenty-two areas which might require more attention in the training of teachers. Unlike the Illinois study mentioned above, the history of English in this study was not grouped with other areas of language study only, but was placed among broad areas of competence ranging over the entirety of a teacher's training program: composition, reading, methodology, unit and lesson planning, motivation, literary criticism, use of mass media and materials, etc. Of the twenty-two areas, the "history and nature of language" was rated first.[8]

This ranking of language history is from only one of three studies designed to elicit opinion about several matters in several ways; moreover, as the editor wisely points out in his headnote to the article, "the reader must be

aware that respondents often have different particulars in mind when they react (sometimes off the cuff) to a particular abstraction on such a list. . . ." But the real importance of the results does not lie in the fact that the "history and nature of language" tops the list. Rather, it is that successful scholars, educators, supervisors, and teachers across the country have so very recently stressed the subject as one needing more attention in the education of a teacher. Enough said.

Precisely what a course in the history of English should be is a question with as many answers as there are concepts of the history of English. Francis Christensen's outline of such a course for the elementary teacher reflects in fact probably a majority view of what desirable content is in a history of English course for prospective high school teachers:

> [The course] should be historical, directed less to the "decay" of the inflections of Old and Middle English than to the development of Modern English, concentrating less on details than on general principles and the development of an attitude toward language, a philosophy of language. It should make it possible for the teacher to deal sensibly with the problem of usage or correctness; the teacher who does not have a thorough understanding of the principle of usage is certain to do more harm than good. A historical course also touches on such relevant topics as changes in the forms of words (pronunciation, spelling, morphology), changes in the meaning of words (semantics), the recording of words (lexicography), and the social and regional variants of the language, a good sampling of which variants the teacher is likely to have in any given class in many American communities. It should not stop short of a survey of American regional dialects.[9]

Such an outline is representative because it strikes a balance between attention to historical materials and attention to the larger principles associated with them. Along with the emphasis on the history of English these days is often a caveat that the teacher should be striving for "a broad acquaintance with the nature and causes of language change, both past and present," rather than the mastery of "a legion of minute details," to use the words of the *Report of the Commission on English*.[10]

Whether such materials with their implications can be taught adequately in a one-semester course is another question. Perhaps as we improve our programs in English education and require more in-depth study for certification, we will recognize that our college course offerings often do an injustice to the history of English by surveying it too rapidly for the prospective teacher to appreciate, let alone to later teach. At the very minimum, college courses must treat the subject sufficiently to suggest its

fullness and implications and instill in the future teacher a sense of its value in the classroom. Only when this is achieved can we reasonably expect a teacher's attitudes and methods to be influenced by the study.

The effects a course in the history of English ought to have on a teacher are manifold. In general terms, the teacher should have the depth of knowledge requisite for understanding his business, and language is his business. This in itself is adequate reason for requiring a course in the history of English of all prospective teachers. More practically, the teacher should possess a knowledge of the kind of material which can make him more confident and so more comfortable teaching English studies generally, including literature and composition. The authors of *Project Grammar* asked chairmen to explain why a course in the history of English should be required, and they list a series of very wide-ranging responses. Preceding the responses is this comment: "The course is, in fact, generally thought of as being capable of accomplishing almost anything, and is looked upon as a miraculous moment in the linguistic education of a student."[11] My response to the comment is, "Well, why not?" The material is rich, and if it has not been developed for the high school teacher, it is not the fault of the material.

Specifically, the history of the language can help improve a teacher's ability to describe language and to judge available descriptions of it. In 1933 Robert Pooley set down a mandate for authors of textbooks on the English language:

> It is inconceivable, therefore, that anyone should attempt to describe modern English, or much less to prescribe for it, without a thorough knowledge of the facts of its history and the principles underlying the facts. . . . It is imperative . . . that the writer of a textbook in English grammar should be thoroughly trained in the history of English.[12]

Not all authors of texts have heeded the advice, with the result that on the market today are books which in fact, tone, and implication are an outrage, in part because authors do not understand historical linguistics. If the teacher is not to be bullied by big names, bright covers, and sales representatives, he must have his own basis for choosing a text.

That the history of English provides the best background for a teacher's own perspective on usage is an old suggestion. The majority of English teachers today, I believe, are at least vaguely aware that language changes, that "good" usage is relative, that linguistically one dialect is not superior to another, and that the pronunciation "INsurance" is neither right nor

wrong, but just different from "inSURance." But I am afraid that a vague awareness is all that most teachers have. A correct attitude based on faith is good. But a correct attitude based on knowledge is better. With knowledge will come an understanding of the processes underlying change, so that the teacher will not be limited to parroting "language liberalism," but will be able to recognize fundamentally what is going on around him. Such a recognition, as Professor Albert Marckwardt has suggested, should help the teacher not only "to understand what is back of some of the strange concoctions that her pupils produce from time to time," but to deal with them positively and creatively as well.[13]

The history of the language might also help a teacher with his own presentation of English grammar. In his discussion of the value of the study of Latin for learning English grammar, J. Stephen Sherwin predicts that Latin would be "of little or no help" to a student trying to learn "a descriptive, linguistically oriented, English grammar," but makes in passing the practical suggestion that "teachers of English might conceivably avoid some gross instructional blunders if they really understood the growth and structure of the English language."[14]

At this point, what is important should be clear. Teachers and scholars at all levels of the academic world feel strongly that a knowledge of the history of English is imperative for a high school teacher of English. While different educators have different views of the importance and use of that knowledge, there is much agreement that it will affect a teacher's perceptions, attitudes, and even methods, whether or not he introduces the subject formally into his syllabus.

Books

For the teacher who wishes to refresh his knowledge of the history of English, a glance at the following bibliographies can help lead to a reasonable choice of books:

Linguistic Bibliography for the Teacher of English, rev. ed., Minnesota Council of Teachers of English. This bibliography is annotated (about five lines per entry) and devotes four pages to books on the history of English.

Books for Teachers of English, ed. Edward B. Jenkinson and Philip B. Daghlian. The chapter on language includes but is not limited to books on the history of English. The annotation is very full, running to four or five paragraphs per entry.

Basic Bibliography on the History of the English Language, comp. W. Nelson Francis. This two-page list of books and articles (unannotated) is available free from NCTE/ERIC, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Linguistics and English Linguistics, comp. Harold B. Allen. This paperback, selective and unannotated, covers numerous topics in language study, from linguistic theory and the history of the language to orthography, punctuation, and taboo. Teachers should find it worthwhile to look through this bibliography, if only to get an idea of the nature and range of available studies. Asterisks mark particularly important works.

For the teacher who wishes to read a book which complements a specific way of handling the subject, I have included references at appropriate points in the text.

Notes

1. George Philip Krapp, *Modern English: Its Growth and Present Use*, revised by Marckwardt, pp. 3-4.
2. For summaries of the different attitudes and suggestions about the relationship of these attitudes to a teacher's study of language, see Brian Ash, "A Review of *The Uses of English* by Herbert J. Muller," and Margaret Early, "A Review of *Growth through English* by John Dixon," both in the *English Journal* (February 1968), pp. 258-61.
3. James Sledd, "Bi-Dialectalism: The Linguistics of White Supremacy," *English Journal* (December 1969), p. 1315.
4. John Searles, "Preparation of Teachers of English and Language Arts in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin English Journal* (January 1968), p. 43.
5. Justus R. Pearson, Jr., and James Robert Reese, *Project Grammar: The Linguistic and Language Preparation of Secondary School Teachers of English*, p. 3.
6. Ibid., p. 9.
7. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
8. Nancy S. Boze, "The Proper Study," *Research in the Teaching of English* (Fall 1968), pp. 115-24.
9. Francis Christensen, "The Child's Right to a Teacher Who Knows," *The English Language in the School Program*, ed. Hogan, p. 274.
10. College Entrance Examination Board, *Freedom and Discipline in English: Report of the Commission on English*, p. 38.
11. Pearson and Reese, *Project Grammar*, pp. 13-15.
12. Robert C. Pooley, *Grammar and Usage in Textbooks on English*, p. 153.
13. Albert H. Marckwardt, "Implications of Language Processes for the Teacher," *The English Language in the School Program,* ed. Hogan, p. 256.
14. J. Stephen Sherwin, *Four Problems in Teaching English: A Critique of Research*, pp. 22-23.

CHAPTER TWO

BRINGING THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH INTO THE CLASSROOM

The Goals

In the past, the study of language has too often been associated exclusively with the study of grammar. But today most planners of curricula and, I hope, teachers have come to realize, as one of the *Reports of the Yale Conferences on the Teaching of English* tells us, "that grammar is important, but that grammar is only one part of language study."[1] Yet realization is not equivalent to implementation.

Despite the strong feeling that high school teachers should study the history of the language and the fact that a majority of them do, somehow the final phase in the college-to-teacher-to-student learning process has not developed well. Why there is inadequate transfer is not always clear. One can always fall back on blaming the old scapegoats: English teachers do not have enough time, are not sufficiently encouraged to experiment, are underpaid and so tend to become indifferent, or whatever. But if one thinks that English teachers today are blamed far too much for too much, he can go elsewhere. He can point to those college instructors of courses in the history of English who do not make an effort—or find it below their dignity—to indicate the significance and relevance and potential of their subject. These instructors who fail the future high school teacher are the same ones who reduce their Ph.D. students in literature to baleful lamentation in many of the graduate departments requiring course work in English linguistics.

But the problem here is not to fix blame. It is to determine *why* the teacher should concern himself with the transfer of his knowledge of the history of English into the classroom. I believe that the answer to this question is as important as the content of the subject itself—perhaps more

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important. A little content with the right sense of direction can go a long way. But a teacher with a hoard of material and little sense of direction can very well reduce the history of English to a block of uninteresting and irrelevant information which his students will rapidly label as another obstacle to their learning anything. This section, then, is of major importance for a profitable reading of the following chapters.

Edwin A. Hoey in a 1968 article discusses a series of reasons for teaching the history of English.[2] His reasons seem to fall into six categories of varying scope, categories which I shall use as starting points for discussion in the following pages.

First, knowledge of the history of English is valuable for its own sake, and "students should know something about the heritage of their language just as they should know something about the heritage of their nation and its people."[3] The focus here, on knowledge about language, is distinct from the study of language to better student skills, as Loban, Ryan, and Squire point out.[4] John Algeo has judged former language study as too devoted to skills, "thus putting the subject matter of the English course on the same level as that of home economics, chorus, and physical education."[5] He goes on to say:

> Deliberately limiting what is taught about language to skills of communication seems odd. Of all forms of human behavior, language is the most typically human, being what most clearly distinguishes man from the brute. Furthermore our language is the fullest expression of our whole culture, making men of diverse racial and national backgrounds the heirs of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, and of Milton. Language is thus the essence of our humanity and the embodiment of our history as a people. It would seem to be the subject that is most important to teach about and to understand. Yet English teachers have for too long been victims of propaganda maintaining that their chief function is to provide a service by developing language skills.[6]

But the value of language study for its own sake is not limited to a single culture, nor is it merely chauvinistic. Precisely because the implications of language study are broad, it is unfortunate "how terribly little the human race knows about its most distinctive asset," as R. Glenn Martin has remarked.[7] Whether language began 500,000 or 2,000,000 years ago,[8] it has had plenty of time to grow, become rich, and reflect man. When Herbert J. Muller chose the adjective *humanistic* to describe language study,[9] he hit upon the word most frequently used in connection with teaching the history of the language for its own sake.

The argument that the history of English should be taught as a humanity has appeared often, especially in the last decade, and it is, I think, a good argument. It is not open to the criticism James Moffett makes of those who defend grammar as a "humanity," for the history of English is comprehensive and expansive, and not "a drastically small and specialized subject."[10] The history of English as a humanity is a subject students might well examine not only to learn more about their particular culture and the culture of man generally, but to discover their active roles in the continuation of those cultures.

Hoey's second reason for teaching the history of the language is that it can develop student interest: "Not all students will respond, of course, but I have seen classrooms glow with real excitement when certain facts of language history were brought into the open."[11] Hoey's examples range from the romance of the Indo-Europeans to the puzzle-solving pleasure of comparing similar words in various languages. Moreover, as Albert C. Baugh has said, a teacher with an enthusiasm for words can spread it to his students, "and often arouses an interest which leads to the further study of language. Such an interest makes the encountering of old words and old meanings in literature not a distraction or impediment to the reading process but gives the reader an additional satisfaction and a sense of pleasure in the comprehension of what he reads."[12] When the history of English is used to arouse interest, the method may mean much. If a teacher proceeds with a tightly planned body of material he is determined to make interesting, he might fail disastrously, the fates being what they are. But if a teacher senses an interest in a word or phrase in his classroom, if he can fuel that interest spontaneously with further examples, and if he can work the interest and examples into a discussion of some facet of language, he will have accomplished really important classroom goals. He will have capitalized on student interest, reinforced answers to inquiry on the spot, introduced naturally what in a unit is often introduced artificially (at least from the student's point of view), and flattered and perhaps encouraged a student who did not know he could make an observation with such notable ramifications.

The third major reason for teaching the history of English is that from it students can learn that language changes. Hoey recalls a literal-minded teacher of his in junior high school "who wouldn't let us talk about a *dilapidated* house or fence unless the house and fence happened to have fallen stones."[13] Certainly the principle of language change is important, and it should be one of the most appreciated and most taught elements

from contemporary linguistics. Teachers might experiment with the practical value of teaching language change. For example, students in their writing must make word choices constantly, and teachers determine the excellence of student writing in part by examining these word choices. But few students have any notion of the factors underlying word choice. They work intuitively. Fine, if their intuition is accurate. But when it is not, they should know something about how words lose and gain varying connotations, how local usage is different from national usage and why, how a new word becomes "established" and how to determine when it *is* established, and the like. Briefly, if a student knows how words develop and gain currency, he will conceivably be more aware of the possible implications of his own word choice and more attentive to his teacher's comments on it.

A fourth major reason for teaching the history of English is that "history can help show students how language and society interact."[14] Hoey's examples range from contrasting lists of native and borrowed words from earlier stages in the development of English to loan words from Mexican-Spanish absorbed into American English in the last century (*canyon, burro, ranch, bronco*). He mentions the influence of one dialect on another, including the present influence of Negro dialects on American English as a whole (evident in the popularity of words like *hip* or *cool*). The value of this kind of historical-social study is, first, that students can become aware of the forces which have shaped our language and, second, that they can make their own observations to determine the forces at work during their lives. Such a historical-social study can be, therefore, completely up-to-date and exceedingly relevant.

Again, method is important. The teacher who stops with lists of words should not delude himself into thinking that he has achieved his goal. It is the discussion based on the words and the principles deriving from the discussion which are important. Mere lists of words can be deadly, even when the lists are juxtaposed against cultural influences.

A fifth reason for teaching the history of English is that with it the development of language "rules" can be illustrated. Hoey remarks, "I've seen students really perk up over this chapter in English history. They assume that the rules were always there, presumably set down by the Serpent of Eden, and that language could not exist without rules."[15] The observation is good. Especially today, when students enjoy breaking traditions as well as other things, the notion that authorities have been

whimsical is a delight. All of a sudden a frustrating stricture against this or that current language habit can be seen in the light of history. The student who uses double negatives will be interested to learn that there are hundreds of them in Chaucer and Shakespeare. And he may be further interested in considering Baugh's statement:

> The condemnation of the double negative is due to the eighteenth century grammarians, who did not know enough about the linguistic process to realize that their function was to record accepted usage rather than to legislate. They did a good bit of harm. . . . In the case of the double negative, they reasoned that in language as in algebra two negatives make a positive. This was nonsense; language is often unreasonable [i.e., incorrect in mathematical terms]. When the man in the street says to his butcher, "I don't want none of that there meat I got here yesterday," he does not mean that he wants another tough steak. He is saying emphatically that he does *not* want any more, and this is what the double (or triple) negative has meant throughout the history of the English language. It has been a more emphatic negative, and it is a pity that we cannot use it today.[16]

Beginning with the reality that psychologically multiple negatives mean intensification, students might very well discuss details of current usage which they find satisfying as well as expressive but which might be labeled slang, or dialectical, or unconventional.

The study of the origins of "rules" or language conventions can do more than provide laughs of justification for students who say "I don't want to learn no English." It can provide for all students a further explanation of additional forces altering language history, and it can lead to a discussion of just what convention is, the current pressures for adhering to it, and when those pressures bear strongly on the individual. A desirable result of such classwork might be the renewed confidence of a speaker of nonstandard English in his speech even while he recognizes the forces for standard speech in certain environments. The inductive method can work well here. Once the teacher has provided his students with a starting point, like Baugh's comment on double negatives, he can lead them to make their own observations on the relationship of variants in language to social position, the role of the schools in maintaining language conventions of one sort only, and the justice or wisdom of it all.

Hoey's sixth major reason for teaching the history of English entails an attitudinal change based on what has preceded:

> It's distressing to find how stuffy and snobbish assorted young people can be. I've talked to some who really seem to believe that

> the prestige dialect is the only acceptable one and that anyone who deviates from their concept of "correct" usage is a boob. Maybe, if history's message spreads far enough, we will get a generation of employers who realize that a person might make a good worker despite his solecisms. This alone would have great practical value.[17]

The view that a study of the history of English can and should effect attitudinal change has been voiced often in textbooks and journals. Otto Jespersen's comments on knowledge of and attitudes toward language change, in the often reprinted *Growth and Structure of the English Language,* are as valuable for the student as for the teacher: while those "who know least of the age, origin and development of the rules they follow" are usually conservative or even reactionary about linguistic change, those who study language history "will generally be more inclined to see in the processes of human speech a wise natural selection, through which while nearly all innovations of questionable value disappear pretty soon, the fittest survive and make human speech even more varied and flexible, and yet ever more easy and convenient to the speakers."[18]

But whether or not he agrees that certain innovations represent progress, a student of the history of English should become "intelligently tolerant."[19] This means that while he might indulge in a little condescension with Henry Higgins whenever Eliza Doolittle speaks, he never confuses the delight of snobbery with actual linguistic inferiority. On a universal level, a student who understands the forces behind the development of language can go beyond common cultural prejudices. Despite one educator's enthusiasm, English is not "the best of all possible languages."[20] The student should realize that any living language is the result of various forces, that it continues to change and reflects fairly accurately the culture and purposes of its users—whether the language is English (any dialect of it), Russian, or Chinese.

The six previous categories of reasons for teaching the history of English are full and suggestive. But they do not encompass all the reasons for the activity. Teachers with a knowledge of the subject will find other reasons for bringing the material into their own classes and other ways to use it to work toward their individualized goals. For example, a teacher might want to use the history of English to try to compensate for what students have lost since they have been studying foreign languages less frequently and with less intensity. Even if it was a secondary result of their study and unaccompanied by technical terminology, serious students of foreign languages did learn—and still learn today—about functional differences between languages, the lack of exact correspondence in total range of

meaning between a word in one language and its counterpart in another, the nature of idiomatic language, and the like. But to the extent that the serious students of foreign languages are in a minority, the English teacher must accept a greater burden for instruction about the nature of language.

Another reason for teaching the history of English is to give students a select body of material from which they can draw their own conclusions, after analyzing and synthesizing.[21] The goal here is as much to give the student a chance to develop his thinking about language as to let him discover language facts. A teacher with such a dual goal may lead his students from language observation to language speculation, letting them conjecture about the future of English as a language, the future of individual words and idioms, and so on.

On a very practical level, the teacher can introduce the history of English as an obvious aid to the reading of earlier literature. Professor Baugh touched on a key problem for teachers when he observed that students prefer recent literature in part because "the contemporary book puts little or no linguistic impediment in the way of understanding."[22] In an age when students want immediate relevance, the linguistic impediment can be a great one. Using the history of English as one of the tools to make the reading of Shakespeare or Chaucer easier is an alternative to the use of emasculated translations.

The history of English can be used to help students with their own problems in speech or writing. Louis Muinzer has stated a view forcefully: "Unless each of our students understands the principles of linguistic history, he cannot understand English, and if he cannot understand English, he cannot be expected to write it or read it with much intelligence."[23] Whether one agrees with the extremity of this position, it is true that the history of English can throw light on and sometimes help students solve particular problems of spelling, usage, mechanics, etc.

Is there any reason why one should *not* teach the history of English? One specious reason for introducing the subject is worth quoting. The author of a curriculum guide has suggested that a teacher, with the aid of some books,

> prepare several lectures on the history of the English language and also assign students the task of reporting on various aspects of the language. Why do we suggest several short lectures at this point? Because we feel that students must have the opportunity to listen to several short lectures before they go on to college and to take notes so that they will learn how. We further suggest that the teacher

> collect the notes, comment on them, give students advice as to how to take better notes, but not grade them.[24]

To learn note-taking indeed!

Even if a teacher can accept or be comfortable with only half of the above goals, he still has more than enough reasons to let his students work with the history of English. James R. Squire in an assessment of our direction in English education has said that " 'Use' and 'Growth' are the twin foci of our new perception" and has pointed out the mounting concern for analysis rather than information, for involvement rather than passivity in the student's relation to knowledge.[25] The history of English, because of its far-reaching implications, can affect both the student's use of and growth in language. And language goes on, even in an Electric Age, whether or not McLuhan is right.

Finally, material from the history of English is appropriate for all levels of students. It is not an exclusive study for those who plan to go to college, but part of that "good general education for *all* the pupils as future citizens of a democracy," as James B. Conant phrases it.[26] In fact, one can argue legitimately that those students who do not go to college are the ones who most need to encounter in the high school the humanistic and liberalizing knowledge of language, for they are less likely as a group to encounter it elsewhere. All this is not to say that the history of the language is *the* tool for teaching English studies or producing good "future citizens." But it is one of the twenty a teacher should be able to use. Because of the fullness of the subject, the teacher can expect to find in it a little for each of his students. Perhaps even much for many.

Putting the Material to Work

The next three chapters are neither as reportorial as an annotated bibliography nor as speculative as a theoretical statement on teaching language history. While surveying materials, I have been eclectic in an attempt to give the teacher a base in theory and practice for incorporating the history of English in the classroom. My own analyses, suggestions, and criticisms are intended to increase the efficient use of the material by indicating new content of potential value, new applications of what is already commonly taught, techniques of involving students in the subject, assignments of real (or questionable) worth, and the like. If the teacher finds any of his experiments with this material successful, he can easily expand or fortify his work by further reading and, more important, with examples from his and his students' observations.

Further, the study is not based on one kind of publication (for example, journal articles, college texts, or high school texts), but on all sources which seem helpful. Citation means usually that a work is representative, and lack of citation does not imply a negative judgment. So a teacher should not hesitate to go beyond this work, either by following footnotes to get to source material or by using the previously listed bibliographies.

Also, this work is in no sense a curriculum guide. If a teacher wants one of those, he should go to one. And it is not a teacher's manual ready for instant use in the classroom. Regarding the use of guides or detailed, preplanned units on the history of English, I suggest that the teacher look, learn, but not follow doggedly, even when these works are constructed in part by professional linguists and ballyhooed as impossible to go wrong with. As Shugrue has written, "No curriculum is teacher-proof."[27] I believe that a teacher who wants a unit on the history of English should ultimately devise his own, whatever sources he uses. After all, the learning is in the making.

The teacher will discover that reading the text requires no previous knowledge of linguistics. A teacher without any specialized knowledge of phonology, morphology, and syntax can effectively work with the history of English in his classroom, but he must remember that a knowledge of such matters is important, rewarding, and useful. As he begins to work with the history of the language and develop his special interests, he should carefully consider giving time to whatever aspect of linguistics that will lend precision to his study.

Also, the teacher will discover a certain amount of overlap in the three following chapters. While each chapter tries to maintain its own point of view, what is viewed–the history of English–remains the same. Consequently, the same illustrative detail may pop up in three places; presumably it will accomplish three different things. The teacher should note the importance of the multiple use of a single detail, especially during his initial work with the subject. While mastery of the entire study is an ideal, reality in the classroom is beginning with the incomplete. The teacher should not put off introducing the history of English because his grasp of the subject is not that of a linguist. Rather, he should begin with a few concrete details which he can manipulate to illustrate a number of different principles or processes, and build his repertoire from there.

Moreover, the teacher will discover that certain important topics do not receive proportionate attention in the text. That is because they are

well-treated in single, easily available works elsewhere. For example, the study of dialects, geographical and social, has been so well presented in publications available from the NCTE and other sources that to repeat what has been written in much detail would be superfluous. Again, there is a burden on the teacher to go beyond this publication as his interests become focused.

Finally, the teacher will discover that a number of options are open to him when he treats the history of the language. He should experiment with these options to determine what works in his classes, when it works, and how it can be handled to involve his particular students. Nothing is sacrosanct. The teacher should feel free to roll, twist, pull, jam, expand, or scatter what he will to accomplish any defensible goal. Only mutilation is prohibited. If the teacher at first hesitates to use materials in new or his own unconventional ways, it will probably be because he has not enough material at his disposal or has not learned the material well enough to be comfortable with it. After only a little practice in the classroom with concrete detail, the mastery and confidence needed for the creative use of the subject will begin to come.

Notes

1. Philip Burnham et al., "Some Definitions of Terms: Report of the Language Committee," *Essays on the Teaching of English: Reports of the Yale Conferences on the Teaching of English*, ed. Gordon and Noyes, p. 27.
2. Edwin A. Hoey, "History Might Help," *English Journal* (October 1968), pp. 1041-44. Reprinted by permission.
3. Ibid., p. 1041.
4. Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James Squire, *Teaching Language and Literature*, p. 102.
5. John Algeo, "Linguistic Marys, Linguistic Marthas: The Scope of Language Study," *College English* (December 1969), p. 277.
6. Ibid., p. 278.
7. R. Glenn Martin, "Language–Time to Start," *English Education* (Spring 1970), p. 152.
8. Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, p. 61.
9. Herbert J. Muller, *The Uses of English*, p. 72.
10. James Moffett, *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers*, p. 14.
11. Hoey, "History Might Help," p. 1041.
12. Albert C. Baugh, "Historical Linguistics and the Teacher of English," *College English* (November 1962), p. 108.
13. Hoey, "History Might Help," p. 1042.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 1043.
16. Baugh, "Historical Linguistics," p. 110.

17. Hoey, "History Might Help," p. 1044.
18. Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, pp. 222-23.
19. John A. Rycenga, "Taking a Gamble–One Teacher's Experience with Assignments in Linguistics," *Connecticut English Journal* (Spring 1969), p. 12.
20. Edwin H. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School*, p. 137.
21. Donald A. Sanborn, "What Can We Teach about Language?" *English Journal* (November 1969), p. 1211.
22. Baugh, "Historical Linguistics," p. 107.
23. Louis A. Muinzer, "Historical Linguistics in the Classroom," *Illinois English Bulletin* (October 1960), p. 2.
24. Edward B. Jenkinson, *What is Language? and Other Teaching Units for Grades Seven through Twelve*, pp. 168-69.
25. James R. Squire, "The Running Water and the Standing Stone," *PMLA* (June 1968), p. 525.
26. James B. Conant, *The American High School Today*, p. 24.
27. Michael F. Shugrue, *English in a Decade of Change*, p. 82.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTENT AND TECHNIQUE FOR THE CLASSROOM

The content of the history of the language, though generally agreed upon, is delineated in different ways by different authors. *New Approaches to Language and Composition: Book 8* presents the following lessons in an "overview" of the history of English: "History and the English Language," "Change in the Sounds of English," "Change in the Structure of English," and "Change in the Written Language."[1] Such a division splits internal and external history and accounts for what we have in the records and so reconstruct from. Hook and Crowell entitle their first chapter "The English Language" and divide the content under these headings: "Grammar: Only One Part of Language," "History of the English Language," "Dialectology," "Lexicology," and "Usage."[2] Loban, Ryan, and Squire in their chapter on language define seven areas of language: History of the English Language, Dialectology, Lexicography, Semantics, Phonology, Grammar, Usage.[3] General and specific concepts are provided for each area, and–what is very important–the relations between the areas are suggested by cross references. Edwin H. Sauer has listed ten areas which require attention for "a sound program in language instruction."[4] Along with matters like composition and the moral use of language are the following: a "proper attention to the variety of speculations about the origin of language," a "documented and thoroughly illustrated record of language change," a "history of grammars, with the very special inquiry of *Why* grammar," language and various styles, "family interrelationships among languages," and the "fun" of language, including punning. All of these areas can be part of the study of the history of English, or at least very well illustrated by it.

In the following pages I divide the subject into many sections rather than a few, mainly to allow the reader to see the possibility of developing,

or perhaps omitting, distinct areas for his classes. But the teacher must remember that the sectioning of materials is not definitive, and so he should not hesitate to mix as he pleases or draw up his own categories.

A Definition of Language

One efficient and exciting approach to the history of the language is talking about language in a general way. If students can form their own definition of language as such or fill out a skeletal definition provided by the teacher, they will begin to experience the pleasure of examining what is both broadly human and narrowly personal. The brief definition given earlier can be a good starting point in the classroom: Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols which men communicate with. The teacher might write such a definition on the board, and add jottings below the various elements in it as the class discusses them.

Language must have a system, or there would be no basis for communication. William Chisholm has written that when "the child learns to depend upon 'bye-bye' meaning the same thing from day to day," he is beginning to amass details which will make up the system and will underlie the rules he will use for the rest of his life.[5] But Chisholm goes on to say that the "rules" underlying the system are not what many commonly understand "rules" to be: they are not the arbitrary rules of some eighteenth century grammarians, directions for the "correct" pronunciation of a word, or such. The rules are those which "guarantee that when I say 'What's for supper?' I will not be understood as having said 'My hat is red' or even 'What's for lunch?' "[6]

A teacher can lead his students to an understanding of the importance of "system" in various ways. Younger or less advanced students might discuss simple, common systems they encounter every day, like a system of traffic signs and lights or our monetary system. They should understand that the elements within the system complement one another, so that the system as a whole can theoretically serve all the purposes it exists for. From a discussion of the chaos or catastrophe which occurs when a driver does not understand or follow a system of traffic lights, they can proceed to discuss the breakdown in communication occurring when a speaker cannot order properly the elements of a language: "much dog very his loves him." More sophisticated students can begin with a discussion of, for example, how the pattern rich, rich*er*, rich*est* must be perceived as a whole before a speaker can have an accurate understanding of how each form stands in relation to the others. Students can provide further examples of

the system of English from simple observations on what they say spontaneously in class: certain words like *the* precede nouns, nouns usually show a change to indicate plurality, and the like. The purpose of such discussion is not to try to produce anything like an extended description of the system of English, but to emphasize that a system does and must exist, though the native speaker may be unaware of his knowledge of it. It is precisely his subconscious knowledge of the system, after all, which permits the native speaker without any formal training in grammar whatsoever to order in the only one meaningful and acceptable way the words: "much dog very his loves him."

That the vocal symbols of language are arbitrary has been disputed historically. As a basis for discussion, the teacher might present opposing views of differing authorities and ask his students for comments. Philo Judaeus, a first century Jewish (whence his name) commentator on the Old Testament wrote that "with Moses the names assigned are manifest images of the things, so that name and thing are inevitably the same from the first."[7] Joannes Goropius Becanus, a sixteenth century Flemish physician who loved German, claimed that "German was the language which Adam spoke and in which he gave satisfactory names to all things that when once the name was known, the nature of the thing itself was known."[8] In *Gargantua and Pantagruel* Rabelais recounts the story of a king who shut children in a room, isolating them from environmental influence, to find the "natural" language according to the first word uttered.[9] One of the assumptions underlying this experiment would be that the first word spoken would have a natural or nonarbitrary relation with the thing signified. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards have written that "the belief which is so common that words necessarily mean what they do derives from the ambiguity of the term 'necessary,' which may stand either for the fact that this is a requisite for communication or for the supposed possession by words of intrinsic 'meanings.' "[10] In short, while language of necessity has conventions, the conventions are not of necessity what they are. There is history behind this view, too. St. Augustine wrote in the fifth century that words signify things only because men so agree, "nor do men agree upon them because of an innate value, but they have a value because they are agreed upon. . . ." For this reason, the sign "beta" can mean "a letter among the Greeks but a vegetable among the Latins."[11]

In a discussion based on such opposing views, the student should be able to produce examples illustrating the arbitrary nature of English and of any foreign language he might know. Professor Sauer has written:

> Today's high school boy and girl must learn that it is highly inaccurate to speak of the "rules" of grammar, or "correct" English, if by the word "rules" we mean something fixed, unchanging, and immutable, like the rules or laws of mathematics and physics, for language does not always operate according to such rules. Laws of mathematics and physics are discovered; the "rules" of language are made, and man can and does change the "rules" of language frequently.[12]

The teacher who wishes to proceed inductively might ask his students how slang develops. After an individual or group uses a word like *cool* in a specialized way, what determines whether the specialized meaning spreads to other groups or the majority of the country? When the specialized meaning does spread, what determines how long it exists? And if the specialized meaning fades, why can the word with its nonspecialized meaning continue to exist? In a discussion of each of these questions, students should observe that the decisions of large numbers of people to accept, reject, or accept and then reject particular meanings of words effect language change. But since the change is the result of social forces, it is–in terms of the prevailing language system–arbitrary. *Cool* means "fashionable," or "acceptable," or whatever, not for any logical reason, but because enough people have agreed to understand the word in that way. As with slang, so with the rest of the words in the language. Students should, of course, always start with slang which is current for them, and should not stop until they have conjectured about the future of the slang they use and the reasons for its probable life or death. The introduction of earlier examples of semantic change at this point can confirm the students' observations about the arbitrary nature of word meanings. Learning that *cniht* means "boy" in *Beowulf* but "knight" in Chaucer becomes a historical detail reinforcing a language principle.

At the junior high level, the arbitrary nature of the symbol can be illustrated by the kind of diagram found in *New Approaches to Language and Composition: Book 7.* The chart pictures a horse, which is symbolized in four languages by a spoken word which in turn is symbolized by a written word.[13] After they come to understand the arbitrary nature of language, students should come to realize that no language is the right language. In *Discovering Language: Book 4* Henry I. Christ points out that "to think that the speaker's own method is best is provincial, though widespread in all lands" and gives a series of examples and an exercise to establish the point. The exercise asks students to list "English expressions that use the name of a foreign group," like "Dutch treat," and indicate whether the expression is "unfavorable, favorable, or neutral."[14]

The word "vocal" in the definition of language is important, for too often teachers and students in a literate society associate language, or at any rate "right" language, with writing. Almost fifty years ago, in his Preface to *The Philosophy of Grammar,* Otto Jespersen wrote:

> I am firmly convinced that many of the shortcomings of current grammatical theory are due to the fact that grammar has been chiefly studied in connexion with ancient languages known only through the medium of writing, and that a correct apprehension of the essential nature of language can only be obtained when the study is based in the first place on direct observation of living speech and only secondarily on written and printed documents. In more than one sense a modern grammarian should be *novarum rerum studiosus.*[15]

Yet the popular notion that writing is language remains to be dispelled. Again, discussion would seem to be the best way to get at the point. After a teacher has suggested the great age of speech in contrast to the relative youth of writing, he can ask his students whether a man who cannot write will be able to communicate in his society, how a child learns to speak and write, how much an average American actually writes in contrast to how much he speaks, and the like. The student must realize that language is what he says, and not only what he says in the classroom, and that what is in newspapers or library books is only a representation, more or less imperfect, of what has been said in the past. The notion that language is writing is as objectionable as the notion that whatever is printed is true, and perhaps the two notions have something basic in common.

When discussing the last part of the definition, "that men communicate with," the teacher can and should let his class do all the work. Any comment revealing the interaction of men by means of language will help indicate the expansiveness of the subject. At this point the teacher can stress the impact of the activities of men and the development of society upon language. While language is arbitrary in the sense that its vocal symbols bear no necessary or natural relationship to what they represent, it is culturally determined in the sense that it responds to the human activity of a given society. If Americans in the seventies devise a new way for man to travel–perhaps locomotion produced simply by mental concentration plus electrical charges–the language will respond by absorbing and so popularizing the necessary terminology for discussion of the matter, just as the language of the sixties absorbed the jargon of space travel. Letting students speculate about future social, economic, scientific, and cultural changes and the language changes that might accompany them

could be an effective way to teach the cultural determination of language. If city dwellers get no relief from air pollution, how might they develop an abbreviated form of language for street use, one which would not be obscured when shouted through filters over their mouths? Under what conditions might such a city language alter or even become the language of the whole country? When he can, the teacher might want to relate such a discussion to his literature assignments. Students reading *1984* might consider how "Newspeak" reflects and helps support the political environment it is a part of.

While students provide historical and contemporary illustrations and anecdotes, serious and silly, the teacher should lead them to observe that any man's language is, for him, up-to-date. The speaker of Old English did not regard his utterances as "old," just as the speaker of Middle English did not regard his as "middle." With a few simple questions the teacher can elicit the observation that the most recent slang is going to be old to somebody a few years hence. From such detailed observations students should be able to arrive at the principle that language as a living thing has changed and will continue to change.

The principle is of fundamental importance. In the nineteenth century the view that language is "alive" was developing in America.[16] Today describing language essentially as "a growing organism created by man, changing when his demands upon it change"[17] is common in all but the most unenlightened texts. Students should discuss the implications of the principle of language change, as a basis for considering the history of English as well as for understanding what goes on around them. Here the teacher has an excellent chance to make a student aware of his dual relationship with the English language: *as a speaker he at once uses what others have created and creates what others will use.*

The Origin of Language

Discussing–or guessing–the origin of language can be as interesting an introduction to the history of the language as working with a definition of language. An inductive approach will undoubtedly be most profitable. Henry I. Christ in *Discovering Language: Book 4* suggests that teachers introduce the study by "brain storming" with their students. From a discussion of how language might have begun will come a few "ingenious theories," some of which will be similar to past "scholarly" views. The students can then be congratulated on their perceptions as the teacher introduces a range of views.[18] A Wisconsin curriculum guide suggests

fourteen starting points for discussing language origins, including "How many uses of language did you observe today? (greetings, commands, radio, TV, newspaper)"; "Do animals communicate? Do they talk? By what means do they communicate? In what way is the animal's method less flexible than your own?"; "Try creating a code or secret language."[19]

After student speculation the teacher can introduce previous common theories of language and their nicknames: the theory that language began with the imitation of noises, or "bow-wow" theory; the theory that emotions or exclamations were the basis of language, or "pooh-pooh" theory; the theory that language began as noise emitted from effort or work, or "yo-he-ho" theory; and the theory that natural cries developed, or "goo-goo" theory. Inasmuch as these theories are themselves the results of armchair philosophizing and the origin of language is not known, the theories should be named for the students' amusement and to arouse their curiosity, rather than as facts they are to be tested on. A teacher who wants to encourage his students to criticize the theories can begin by examining the flaws of the "bow-wow" theory. As Christ points out, "echo words" occur infrequently in language and differ from language to language: "An English cat *purrs*, but a French cat goes *ron-ron*."[20] If one likes ultimate problems, he might ask his students what language will be spoken in Heaven, where the origin of all originates. A monk in the Middle Ages thought Hebrew would be current, though he averred that "the blessed would be able to speak all languages."[21] Apparently there is no real worry.

The teacher can, according to the level of his class, proceed to discuss a variety of matters relating to the origin of language and man. *English 11* quotes three views on the relation of human nature and the development of language and asks students to contrast them.[22] Bright students might discuss the three stages in the process of language development which Malinowski posits, beginning with a simplified chart which the teacher puts on the board.[23] All students can certainly discuss the magical power which is often associated with language, like the power of words to open cave doors or curse an enemy or placate the gods, and they might be asked to give examples of set phrasing associated with rituals, religious or otherwise. Finally, students might be asked to wonder why sound—that is, speech—became the basis of communication between men, and not gesturing or writing on tablets carried in purses, or the like. With careful questioning the teacher will be able to lead his students to Joseph H. Greenberg's conclusion:

> In addition to the values inherent in any grammatical system, certain advantages of sound as a medium help explain why language was the first such system to appear. The use of the vocal organs, an overlaid function, did not require the development, through the slow mechanism of genetic change, of a new specialized organ. The voice is always available, involves little physical exertion, and does not interfere with any other activity, except, to a minor degree, eating. Above all, it allows the hands to be free for manipulatory activity. It may be utilized by day as well as night, and it is perceptible in all directions.[24]

The Indo-European Language Family

Almost all college textbooks presenting the history of English treat the Indo-European language family in part by offering a chart or linguistic genealogy. The charts are sometimes simple, sometimes complex, and often college students must reproduce them on tests. The charts are now appearing frequently in materials for high school students. One curriculum guide presents a chart based on material in Paul Roberts' *Understanding English* as a brief statement of the ancestry of English.[25] A high school text gives us a full-page diagram of "the Indo-European language tree" as a tree, replete with leaves bearing, among the more familiar, names like Urdu, Bengali, Kurdish, and Serbo-Croatian.[26] In a very simple text Jo Ann McCormack produces a chart showing not only the place of English in the Indo-European system, but also the influence of other languages on English.[27] Besides charts, one finds with some frequency attention to the Germanic group of languages. An Oregon curriculum guide contrasts the forms of two words, *hand* and *drink*, as they appear in the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic branches of the Indo-European language family, and high school texts often list cognates from several Indo-European languages for the student to analyze.[28] The value of comparing the various forms of a word like *mother* in Latin, Old English, Greek, Sanskrit, etc., is that the student can begin to understand through such suggestive details the very process used by linguists to derive conclusions about the existence of a single, ancestral language from which all Indo-European languages have descended. This inductive process is equally important when trying to fix the geographic home of the earliest speakers of Indo-European by examining their vocabulary for words indicating snow or heat, water or land, or animals and plants associated with a limited region. Another curriculum guide devotes one day to the Germanic branch of Indo-European, covering what is usually found in a college text, and ending with this directive: "Research: Investigate Grimm's Law, the first

Germanic consonant shift (1822)."[29] Presumably the uninitiated reader will understand that the date has to do with Grimm, not the shift.

It is not always clear why many authors of curriculum guides and high school texts want students to study this facet of the history of English in detail. In "A Workable Nongraded Language Arts Program for Senior High Schools," Dorothy McCoy lists the history of the language among important subjects to be taught and specifies its content thus: "particularly Indo-European heritage, comparison of Germanic and Romance."[30] In this brief article one does not expect or get much explanation, but the "particularly" is odd. A curriculum guide which presents a chart of the Indo-European language family tells us under it that "students might be interested in comparing it" with charts in a few listed books.[31] Might they? In fairness I must add that the guide goes on to suggest other exercises, like investigating languages other than English. But there is still a sense of uncertainty about the reason for incorporating the material. An assignment in one short history reduces the whole matter to absurdity: Students are given a list of thirty-two Indo-European languages and a chart with empty blanks. Evidently they are to skip back a couple of pages and find out from a prose statement which language fits where in the family so that they can scribble "Faroese" in the right slot.[32]

But teachers should not dismiss this material simply because authors too frequently are not very convincing about its classroom use. A teacher can get his own basic materials from any college-level history of the language text or from many of the popular dictionaries. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* is particularly valuable. Among its introductory articles it contains "A Brief History of the English Language" and "The Indo-European Origin of English," both of which present facts with implications which can be discussed in the classroom. The Appendix to this same dictionary is a glossary of Indo-European roots which lists the varying forms a root takes on in different Indo-European languages and which refers back to entries and etymologies in the main body of the work. The Appendix is prefaced by an essay entitled "Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans" and followed by a "Table of Indo-European Sound Correspondences" and endpapers charting the family. All together, a sufficient and sound source which gives much rich information for the first time in a book that should be available in every school library.

The value of going directly to such a source instead of relying on what high school texts or teachers' guides present is that the teacher with a little

ingenuity will certainly find something to adapt to his particular students' interests. The anthropologist will be pleased to learn that we can reconstruct roots for words like *corn, plow,* and *harvest* and for the names of domestic animals, like *cow, sheep,* and *lamb.* Conjectures about the significance of such words in determining whether a society is nomadic should be his. The literary-minded student will be delighted to see the underlying relationships between common and uncommon words which never strike one as sharing anything. The women's liberationist might be angered into investigation by discovering how roots for words indicating kinship can reveal a patriarchal society. The uninterested student who responds only to what is personally relevant might have his curiosity aroused when he encounters the base, history, and noble relatives of his favorite obscenities. The teacher who individualizes such content for his students, encourages them to speculate on interesting though presently unanswerable questions, like whether all languages are ultimately related, and stresses the process and pleasure of comparative linguistics will succeed; however, the mere presentation of charts or naming of related languages or lecturing and testing on isolated details will in all but a few classrooms be meaningless to most students and fatal to the subject.

The History of Writing and English Spelling

Both of these subjects are often found in books on the history of English, despite the fact they record language rather than partake of its essential nature. Materials range from sophisticated analyses of the development of the alphabet to the commonplace statements of the characteristics of modern English spelling which permitted Shaw to spell *fish* as *ghoti* ("gh" as in *enough*; "o" as in *women*; "ti" as in *nation*).

A teacher who decides to include material on the development of writing will find systematic statements of varying complexity in a variety of books.[33] For the teacher who wants to illustrate changes in spelling as well as the physical appearance of English writing and early printing, the *Leaflets on Historical Linguistics* available from the NCTE will be valuable.[34] One curriculum guide offers a choice of a four- or five-day unit on the "Historical Development of English Spelling," complete with exercises, discussion topics, and aids for the teacher.[35] The teacher must be eclectic, of course. Examining complex schemes of the development of the alphabet or strings of minutiae in the history of English spelling will bore a large majority of students. But going through, for example, the development of "A" from a pictograph to the modern English letter (first

the head of an ox, then conventionalized to "V," then inverted) can be fun, illustrative, and even memorable.[36]

An excellent starting point for a discussion of the history of spelling is, of course, the misspellings of one's own students. A teacher who keeps lists or has his students keep lists of misspellings might group some of the collected words according to the problem underlying the misspelling. Are unpronounced consonants omitted in the misspelling (*fok* for *folk* or *brit* for *bright*) or are vowels which have been reduced to "uh" [ə] incorrectly remembered (*capeble* for *capable*)? Historical explanations of a few such problems will not only enrich a student's knowledge of his language, but in some cases will provide the necessary mnemonic devices for the future. And if given with some sense of humor, such explanations can let a teacher convey a little sympathy for those frustrated spellers who in reality produce fairly "phonetic" or analogical spellings of their own devising.

After all, many former "misspellings" have after a time come to be accepted as the conventional ones. While the "gh" of *knight* can be traced back through Middle English to Anglo-Saxon times, the "gh" of *delight* is less genuine. The word *delight* was borrowed from Old French during the Middle English period, spelled during Chaucer's time as *delit* and so pronounced "duh-leet". The word was never pronounced with "gh" in it, from its appearance in English to the present. But in the Renaissance, after words like *knight* lost the sound indicated by "gh" but retained the "gh" spelling, the word *delight* was "misspelled" with "gh" by people who *heard* that it now rhymed with words like *knight* and so wanted it to resemble those words on the page. A student today who writes "tright" for "trite" or "kight" for "kite" because he hears that *trite* and *kite* rhyme with *knight* and *light* engages in the same process that resulted in the Renaissance respelling of *delit* as *delight*. Only mere convention and the whimsical favor of Time are not with him, poor fellow.

The influence of printing on English spelling can be profitably discussed here. Manuscripts produced during the Middle Ages reflect the dialect area they came from in their spellings. Authors and scribes tended to spell as they heard, and they heard different pronunciations and forms in the North, South, East, and West of England. Concern for and spread of uniform spelling did not begin until the introduction of printing by William Caxton, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Then the dissemination of numerous copies of a work showing no variation due to the writing habits of a particular scribe or the dialect he spoke established the conventions we now accept. The process was slow, and early printers

sometimes worked against it with their own liberties. A typesetter who did not want to bother respacing the words in a short line to make the right-hand margin even might instead add an extra "e" to the last word or double its final consonant to fill in the blank. In other words, he used or invented variant spellings to meet the demand for a physically attractive page. But by the eighteenth century the force for uniformity had prevailed, and English spelling was mainly stable. Subsequent changes, whether influenced by spelling reformers or the attractiveness of a new convention, occurred mainly in isolated cases, and together never had the impact of the development of printing.

With a little knowledge of how and why printing influenced spelling, students can discuss questions affecting or dictating their own performances. Did English spelling become stabilized too early and does it now need updating? Should we take the advice of spelling reformers, who might argue for a spelling system in which each distinctive sound would be signified by one–and only one–symbol? After all, Germans and Italians do not suffer the frustrations of Americans when they spell, since their spelling systems allow them to write down words pretty much as they hear them, without strings of exceptions that need to be memorized. Or should we give up our conventional spellings and let each man go his own way, with no attempt to achieve or maintain uniformity? If we allow individuality in dress, haircuts, and speech, why not in spelling? What would be the disadvantages of such personalized spelling, and how great might they become? Considering such questions can bring students both to understand how some of their individual spelling problems stem from past forces which helped shape the look of our language and to appreciate present concerns for an easier spelling system.

Language and Culture

The matter discussed here is the relation between forces in a society and the development of that society's language, and not the question of the influence of one's language on his perception of the world. This part of the history of English, often called the external history, pertains, in one way or another, to all the other parts of the study. Deciding on how best to integrate this material for classroom presentation may be a somewhat difficult, though certainly a most interesting, task.

An overview is available in one curriculum guide which provides a graph indicating the rapidity of language change in a series of historical periods

from Anglo-Saxon times to the present. Accompanying the graph are statements of what was happening to influence English during these periods.[37] Loban, Ryan, and Squire give a two-page, very efficient summary entitled "Key Events Influencing the Development of English." The summary is set up chronologically, with historical events and their influence on language set in parallel columns.[38]

Sauer suggests introducing the subject, in this case the influence of the Norman Conquest, "by asking students to try to imagine the difficulties which arise when a conqueror attempts to take over a defeated country."[39] The question can be fruitful, if the teacher is aware of and can reveal the complexity of the answer.[40]

Students will generally be able to understand the effects of a situation in which the language of the ruling class, in this case French, differed from that of the ruled. The language of the lower classes, English, no longer had a literary or a prestigious dialect, a form of language to imitate because of its association with kings and courtiers, with the result that the speech of the masses could change rapidly in many directions. The student might consider what would happen today if the so-called guardians of the language—public speakers, essayists, television announcers, and teachers with their textbooks and dictionaries—ceased to maintain the general standard which all of us are aware of and many of us imitate. English after the Norman Conquest did develop without the conservative influence of the educated upper classes. The inflectional endings of Old English were lost because of societal activities, like the settling of the Danes, and because of inherent characteristics of English, like the strong stress on the root syllable which weakened the stress on the inflectional ending.

When English reappeared as a prestige language in the fourteenth century, its grammatical system was significantly altered. The cause of the reappearance of English as a prestige language was just as political as the cause of its previous disappearance. By the fourteenth century the rulers in England had a new spirit of nationalism, thought of themselves as English rather than as invaders, began to try legal cases in English rather than in French, and supported court poets like Chaucer, who not only wrote in English but translated from the French. With the reestablishment of a prestige dialect for English came the reestablishment of a conservative influence, a restraining force. The language continued to change, but never with the speed or pervading effects of the period from 1100 to 1350. A knowledge of the effects various forceful political actions can have on a language helps provide a sound basis for student discussion of the com-

plexities involved in language change and in the establishment and maintenance of prestige forms of speech.

The teacher should range widely when illustrating the forces which can change language. Students should know that scholars and writers, like those in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance who thought English needed to be enriched, often introduced "inkhornisms" or learned terms, some of which were long lived, like *ingenious, fertile,* or *confidence.*[41] But they should realize on the other hand that the influence of such writers was only minor. Students should know that chauvinism can alter attitudes toward language. The super-patriots after 1776 who wanted to change the national language to Hebrew or Greek felt that independence should be reflected not in the alteration of their speech, but in its replacement.[42] In such cases, the drive for a change which is unnecessary or without common support or unfeasible lives only as an anecdote.

Students today should know the material in Helen Y. Hahn's "The Effect of Two World Wars upon Our Language,"[43] and they should be able to produce for themselves glossaries of recently introduced scientific terms like those in articles for teachers and classroom texts.[44] They should be aware of the fact that in a given community "social pressures are continually operating upon language, not from some remote point in the past, but as an immanent social force acting in the living present."[45] What is important is that the teacher constantly stress the adaptability of language to society, whether in the international matters of war and scientific innovation or the more circumscribed affairs of a tiny rural settlement.

Beginning with details, students can proceed to abstract a few generalizations about the impact of culture on language. An advertisement in *Antiques Magazine* once offered a free can of paint remover to those who could identify some contraption from two hundred years ago which looks to the modern reader like an instrument of torture. Presumably, when the object was useful, its name was current. Now both object and name have disappeared from our society. Discussing place names can lead elsewhere. The name remains, but the social forces and history behind it are lost to most present speakers of the language. So we have a living relic. To give students an opportunity to examine current creations stemming from cultural interests, one text asks the following: "Show how we add words to our vocabulary by using a word connected with sports to explain something that is not related to sports."[46] Here a cultural interest has grown so strong that its terminology can elucidate something else. A

Minnesota curriculum guide suggests an interesting exercise in which the student creates a chart showing the effect of culture on word change. The word *farmer,* for example, used to mean simply "one who farms"; its newer meaning of "boor" or "clod" results from the urbanization of society in which a farmer loses status and the word along with him.[47] In this instance it is noteworthy that the direction of the meaning of *farmer* towards "boor" mirrors a change in the word *boor* itself, which earlier meant "peasant." As a finale, students might speculate whether the recent interest in fleeing polluted cities will alter the direction of change of the word *farmer.*

Grammatical Change in the History of English

Differences in grammar can be observed in a casual way with the use of any one of a number of texts which provide passages from different periods of English.[48] A common procedure is to present in parallel columns the same passage, often a Biblical text, in Old, Middle, and Modern English. The teacher can lead students to comment on major differences in word order and endings and to produce a couple of generalizations about grammatical change in the last thousand years. One curriculum guide presents a more detailed analysis in the form of a ten-day unit which introduces the concept of signals, provides full charts showing the reduction of inflectional endings from Old English to Modern English, and suggests research topics.[49] A simple, three-page survey in a classroom text begins with the idea of structure and proceeds through the historical periods. The detail is very selective, of course.[50]

Individual aspects of grammatical change can, of course, be studied in great detail. An Oregon curriculum guide treats the auxiliary in Modern English, then Early Modern English, Old English, and Middle English. Lists of examples are provided from each period, and the student is expected to arrive at a rather accurate understanding of the development.[51] Bright and interested students may be up to such material, but I wonder whether the average student is, especially if transformational grammar is used to illustrate the successive stages in such change. It would seem to me to be more fruitful for most students to discuss what Paul M. Postal has called "the reformulation of previous grammars by children in order to yield an optimal grammar,"[52] or specifically, for example, the place of *mans* as a plural in the Modern English inflectional system.

Exercises designed to illustrate grammatical properties and change vary. Sometimes high school students are asked to create their own "code

language" to learn principles of structuring,[53] or they might rephrase literally translated Old or Middle English sentences to produce current word order,[54] or those who have respectable analytical powers or are students of German might examine selected Old English sentences to discover the differences between strong and weak adjectival endings and their respective environments.[55] As long as an exercise is not above a particular student's ability and leads to some principle, it is worth experimenting with. The exercises which I question are those which ask students to hunt through long passages to find inflectional endings so that they can transcribe the endings on a clean sheet of paper.

Classroom work leading towards the understanding of some principles of grammatical change need not be complex. Using examples in current English, a teacher can illustrate freedom of word order in Old English in this way. In Old English the phrases of "The boy kicked the horse" (the boy, the horse, kicked) might be arranged in any order without altering meaning. But the freedom of arrangement was possible because each phrase was marked, according to its function, by an inflectional ending. Thus in this example, if 1 as an ending means the subject of the verb and if 2 as an ending means the object of the verb, the function of the phrases cannot be mistaken no matter how the phrases are placed:

(the+2 horse+2) (kicked) (the+1 boy+1)
(kicked) (the+1 boy+1) (the+2 horse+2)
(the+1 boy+1) (the+2 horse+2) (kicked)

But in Modern English, where *the* is an invariable word which does not alter an ending to indicate subject or object and where nouns take no special endings to indicate subject or object, a definite phrase order must take on the burden of indicating what is subject and what is object: "The boy kicked the horse." Alteration of the phrase order alters the meaning.

What is important for the student to understand is that, during the development of English, the way of indicating a certain function (object of the verb, for example) may have been lost, but the lost way has been replaced by another. The replacement of a lost indicator of function by a new one insures that the grammar of the language will continue to specify those functions which speakers must identify for unambiguous communication. So no matter how striking grammatical change may be over a number of centuries, like inflectional leveling in English, it is not merely capricious, but always subservient to the needs of the speakers of a language.

Studying grammatical systems and grammatical change leads naturally to the basic question, "What is a grammar?" Students for the most part still believe that the grammar—or as they are wont to say, the "rules"—of English descended from some authority higher than the language itself. Here history can help perspective. A grammatical description of Old English obviously must devote a good deal of time to listing the form and function of the numerous inflectional endings in that language. But as inflectional endings are lost, the grammar will change: by Chaucer's time, Middle English shows endings fairly similar to those in Modern English, with only a few remnants of Old English yet to die. Students should be able to arrive at conclusions inductively, if the teacher provides a few simple examples. A grammar of either Old or Middle English is simply a description of how in fact the system worked. The best grammar is simply the most comprehensive, most exact, most internally consistent, and yet the most concise description. So too with Modern English.

The question of what a grammar is and the historical materials pertinent for beginning to answer it make an effective introduction to or interlude in students' work with the grammar of their own language. If they are surveying traditional grammar and find elements in it which do not seem to fit the language as they know it, they should understand that earlier English grammars were written by Latinists, who used as their model Latin grammars. Now the Latin grammars used were good ones for Latin because they were based on and described Latin. But since Latin is a highly inflected language, like Old English, a good grammar of Latin does not make for a good model for a Modern English grammar—just as a satisfactory description of Old English would not be a satisfactory one for Modern English.

As a matter of fact, some early grammarians did realize that the grammar they worked out for English from Latin did not always fit the native tongue. Their answer was simple enough: change the language to fit the grammar. And if called to defend their presumptuousness, such enlightened reasoners of the eighteenth century could argue that English was a very imperfect language anyway, and Latin a very admirable one, and so why not improve what we have by forcing it into a more elegant, albeit rather unnatural, mold. And so grew the situation which for years resulted in students saying that they finally understood English grammar only after they understood Latin grammar. That made Latin teachers happy since it helped justify their pay, but what it did to frustrate English teachers is another story. And as a matter of fact students really did *not*

learn English grammar–that is, a description based on and consistent with their language–even after studying Latin. They only learned to force an effective description of one language rather ineffectively onto another. "What is a grammar?" should be asked as well when students are examining structural or transformational grammar. In any case, the teacher must remember that the students' own observations about English and their attempts at generalizations are far more important than a presentation of a textbook definition. It is the inductive process which provides much of the understanding and pleasure of linguistics.

Finally, observing the system in language, whether Old or New English, and building a definition of grammar should lead to a recognition of the difference between grammar and usage: that a grammar can be written for any dialect of English and that a grammar is good or bad only insofar as how efficiently it describes a particular dialect. Understanding this, students are then in a position to appreciate that all dialects of a language have systems permitting communication and that a particular dialect becomes prestigious not because of linguistic superiority, but because of social and economic environment.

Sounds in the History of English

The teacher who wants to discuss sounds in the history of English can examine the pronunciation of various stages of English, or the actual processes of sound change, or both. For most classes, careful listening to and some imitation of the sounds of Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English will result in sufficient coverage of the sounds of the past. For these purposes the teacher can efficiently use available recordings to supplement his own reading of the originals. For an average class, a ten-inch LP provides a few passages from *Beowulf*, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and the Gettysburg Address–enough material to fill an hour when brief discussion follows each selection.[56] For a class that has become interested in phonology or individual students who want to research the subject, good longer recordings of earlier English are available.[57]

If a teacher wants his class to go beyond careful listening and some imitation, he can provide simple exercises which ask students to pronounce, for example, Old English words but give them keys to the pronunciation.[58] More sophisticated yet, and provided for Chaucer's English by one curriculum guide, is a chart which in parallel columns gives the Middle English spelling, the Middle English pronunciation, and the Modern English word.[59] I believe that generally teachers should not press

for great accuracy of detail when students try to read original texts aloud, whether Chaucer or Shakespeare. Readings of early literature which are internally consistent can come only after a study of phonetic transcriptions of the works. Even then one runs into disagreement among scholars over important matters. Instead, students armed with a few general principles (like "pronounce all consonants in Chaucerian English") should be encouraged to experiment and have fun with the language.

The interest in the pronunciation of Chaucer is old. The interest at the high school level in the processes of sound change generally and specific changes in English is relatively new. The Great Vowel Shift, which used to plague some Ph.D. candidates writing philology prelims, appears in two curriculum guides, explained in phonemic and phonetic terms and with the old directions to "Pronounce like the vowel__in the German word _____."[60] When the matter makes its way into classroom texts, it usually appears as a name coupled with a forgettable generality. It seems to me that a teacher might deal more effectively with changes in words because of assimilation, or a shift in juncture, for instance, than with complex patterns which necessitate phonemic transcription.

For example, tracing a form like *windas* to its Modern English equivalent, *winds,* can be handled so that it relates to something that all students already know but requires no special knowledge of phonetics. In Old English the "a" of *windas* was pronounced like the "a" of *father,* and the "s" was pronounced like the "s" in *sit.* Otherwise the word was pronounced as in Modern English. The "as" was an inflectional ending indicating plurality and case (subject or object of the verb) and is the basis of our present "s" plural. But between Old English and Modern English the "as" plural (pronounced "ahs") was reduced to "s" (pronounced "z"). The process starts with the stress of Old English, which was on the root of the word: *wíndas.* The vowel of the inflectional ending, because it was unstressed, gradually became less and less loud and distinct and was finally lost. The original "s," because it was unstressed and next to a voiced sound (one made with the vocal cords vibrating, like "d," "z," "m," or any vowel) became more like that neighboring sound: it became voiced itself (pronounced "z"). Only a few students may be interested in terminology like *syncope*, the loss of a sound within a word, or *assimilation*, the alteration of a sound so that it becomes more like a neighboring one. Most, however, should be able to understand something about how sounds change and to appreciate that current spellings, where they do not reflect current pronunciations, may reveal past ones: so the "s" of *winds.*

After tracing the development of *windas*, a teacher might want to illustrate the parallel development of *stanas*, Modern English *stones*. In this case the vowel "a" of the inflectional ending was also weakened and lost, and the "s" became voiced (pronounced "z"). But the present spelling of the word reveals not only the original "s," but in the "e" a remnant of the earlier vowel, now unpronounced. Students are often surprised when their attention is drawn to words which they do not misspell but which nevertheless are significantly different on paper and in the air. For them the difference is but another example of the vagaries of English spelling, but their recognition of what they have mastered can be flattering, if not rewarding.

When a class talks about sound change, it might very well touch on the interesting question of how we reconstruct sounds of the past. A teacher can begin with a few lines of Chaucer, asking his students how they might determine whether the final "e's" on many of the rhyming words were pronounced. Does it make a difference that these "e's" occur either in pairs or not at all? Students should be able to guess that the patterning by two probably means that the vowels were pronounced, while irregular occurrence could indicate that the "e's" did not affect rhyme and so were silent. Students can also consider the implications of Chaucer's rhyming two words which do not rhyme today, as he does in lines 5 and 6 of the *General Prologue: breeth* (breath) and *heeth* (heath). During such discussions, the teacher should not hesitate to use what the students know, Modern English, to help illustrate what they do not know. How, for example, could someone today who did not know that *and* is usually pronounced "uhn" discover this fact from written records only, like advertisements or product names? The important goal here is not that students learn whatever details they discuss, for these are only a fraction of the sounds of language they hear and usually must be chosen arbitrarily anyway. The important goal is that they themselves observe and describe and then discover that they are capable of these processes, so that in some little or even highly personalized way they become linguists.

Development of the English Vocabulary

This subarea of the history of English complements and is complemented by the next, "Semantic Change." In fact a teacher might very efficiently deal with the two subareas at the same time, as some curriculum guides and texts do.

An Oregon curriculum guide states that

> most of the words in the English lexicon can be divided into three groups: (1) native words such as *heorte* (heart), (2) borrowed words such as *cattle* (from French), and (3) newly formed words which have been made up at various times from elements already in the language. Examples of this last type are Old English *hwaelweg* (whaleway or whaleroad, "the sea") and modern English *afterthought* or *overthrow.*[61]

Such a statement can be used by the teacher to introduce the study of the English vocabulary, to set up a pattern against which students can understand coming detail. Or it can be a goal a teacher wants his students to arrive at inductively, after they have examined the historical facts. Whatever the process, the larger understanding of the growth of the Old English *wordhord* into our present vocabulary must emerge as primarily important.

In most curriculum guides and high school texts the illustrative detail for the development of the English vocabulary comes from a few college texts. Baugh's *A History of the English Language* appears to be the most used source book, though others are mentioned frequently enough.[62] Usually the words treated are arranged in groups chronologically and with reference to external factors influencing lexical growth. French words taken into Middle English reflect the influence of the Norman Conquest, just as learned words borrowed later from Greek and Latin reflect the interests of the Renaissance. The essential coverage is the same in almost all the derivative works, differences being reducible to a matter of quantity of detail or complexity of presentation. I suggest that the teacher go to one of the popular source texts himself to select what will interest his students. The college texts, by the way, are often far more readable than the works which lean on them, even for the uninitiated.

Besides lecturing on it, the teacher can handle the material in a number of different ways. By far the most common (and I believe least useful) exercise requires students to look up the etymologies of strings of words in a dictionary. *The Macmillan English Series 8* gives four groups of words with directions like "What did each of the following words originally mean?" and "From what different language or languages did each of the following words come?"[63] The material covered by such exercises is usually good, and I suppose that there is nothing wrong with such kitchen chemistry, but the exercises too often end with themselves, entail much

busy work (lexicographers, not dictionary users, are supposedly the drudges), and undoubtedly will kill rather than create interest for many.

This is not to suggest that word histories cannot be interesting or that the study of etymology cannot be fun. The experience of many teachers proves they can be. But it is to stress that the mechanics of such study must be kept to a minimum, while the curiosities, implications, and opportunities for student commentary must be foremost.

A Minnesota curriculum guide makes more of the material when it presents a group of religious terms, asks the student to comment on their place in the culture and why they were borrowed, etc.[64] *The Macmillan English Series 12* lists the 10 most commonly used words in English and states that of the 122 most frequently used words in the language, only 12 are not native.[65] Such information can be an effective basis for a discussion of the relation between native words, borrowed words, and the very basic elements of our vocabulary. Interesting in a different way is Jewell Kirby Fitzhugh's suggestion that one facet of Old English wordmaking–compounding–lives on vigorously in the speech of American mountaineers. These "hillfolks" say "spear-side" of a house to denote men, "spindle-side" for women, and "play-pretties" for toys.[66] With such a start students might easily discuss present-day compounding and its similarity to the kennings of *Beowulf.* Henry I. Christ offers an exercise which asks students to consider the difference between words set in pairs, one word native and the other Romance: *calf–veal, old–venerable, live–reside.*[67] Not only do such exercises require the student to analyze, while relieving him at least somewhat of the busy work of page flipping in a dictionary, but they can lead to a discussion in which the student handles knowledge in a way that he may come to possess it.

Semantic Change in English

This section is limited to changes in the meanings of English words, and touches only accidentally on the broader field of general semantics. But in the classroom, work with any kind of word change has implications for critical reading and listening which a teacher should not ignore. Also, this section is concerned primarily with the processes of semantic change rather than individual word histories for their own sake. While the latter are often exceedingly interesting, valuable for arousing student interest, and historically part of the study of English, the processes of change have been given increasingly greater attention in the last two decades. The classic works on words and dictionaries of etymologies continue to be

recommended, but in-class activity is more likely to center around questions like "Do you think we should start [a study of meaning change] with our own time? What advantage will we have?"[68]

The number of individual processes of meaning change a student can be expected to understand varies from author to author. Louis A. Muinzer in an influential article lists eleven and says that his presentation is "convenient, if not absolutely satisfactory": (1) generalization, (2) specialization, (3) degradation, (4) elevation, (5) concretization, (6) abstraction, (7) radiation, (8) euphemism, (9) hyperbole, (10) popular etymology, and (11) transference.[69] Curriculum guides usually do not contain this number of specific changes, but the four processes of generalization, specialization, elevation, and degradation (pejoration) are common in guides and high school books which treat the subject.[70]

To illustrate these changes the teacher can choose words from Old English to the present from any of the previously mentioned texts, dictionaries, and other source books. *Starve* in Old English and Middle English meant "die" from whatever cause, whereas today *starve* means "to be very hungry," with fatality added in *starve to death*. The first step in the development of the word was specialization, which occurred when *starve* took on a narrower meaning by adding a particular cause of death, want of food. The next step reveals a shift in meaning, from emphasis on death for a particular reason, to the cause itself, want of food. Hyperbolic use of the word is undoubtedly responsible for this shift: just as one might say "I'm burning up" simply because he happens not to be in an air-conditioned house, he can say "I'm starving" simply because the pizza will take ten more minutes. The next step occurs because a word frequently used hyperbolically tends to lose force: everyone knows that "I'm starving" as commonly used carries no threat of imminent fatality. Consequently, when many speakers wish to convey the real threat of death from hunger, they feel that *starve* by itself is inadequate. To be clear, they might say, "Since pollution killed the plant life, thousands of fish are *starving to death*." Now an entire phrase is necessary to call up the meaning previously indicated by *starve* alone. Will the development of the word stop here? If in our enthusiasm for the effect of hyperbole we begin to use the entire phrase *starve to death* to stress that dinner is late, as some speakers presently do, and if the phrase finally comes to mean what *starve* usually means today, how might future speakers compensate?

Every teacher will compile his own stockpile of words which illustrate semantic change in one interesting way or another. *Tackle* in Chaucer

refers to the tools of one's trade, while today it is most used to refer to fishing gear. The development of *corn* in America illustrates a change in meaning caused by an old word in a new environment. Because of our current willingness to talk freely about sex, the population explosion, and heir pollution, "the Pill threatens to monopolize the use of that name, so that before long all other pills will have to be known as tablets, or something of the sort."[71] Some of the best examples should be students' examples, of course, whether from their reading of Chaucer or Shakespeare or jokes in the newspaper. Then the duty of the teacher becomes simply directing attention to the processes involved.

A teacher can test his students on semantic change in English by asking them to trace words which have been discussed or to define terminology and illustrate specific processes, as some curriculum guides and texts suggest. A better assessment, I believe, will focus on the students' ability to discover a principle when a teacher produces historical data and then to prove their understanding of that principle by the spontaneous addition of current examples.

Dialects

There has been an upsurge in dialect study in the schools, prompted by the popularizing of the work of linguists, social pressures for equality, and a concern for American heritage. Most of the materials prepared for the secondary school treat American geographical and social dialects. With a record like *Americans Speaking* and an introduction to American dialect study,[72] the teacher will have plenty of material for illustration and discussion. *The Macmillan English Series 10* and *11* have chapters on dialects, with some interesting exercises and suggested classroom activities.[73]

Differences and similarities between American and British English are illustrated clearly, specifically, and often with much wit in discussions between an American and a British linguist.[74] One of the effects of examining such material in the classroom should be, as Professor Sauer has suggested, to dispel "the notion that American English is inferior, even vulgar and crude, compared with the variety spoken by Englishmen."[75] Another should be the recognition of the positive relation of American English to American studies generally.[76]

Middle English and Old English dialects, whether for better or worse, are making some headway in the schools. While a few texts mention them in passing or provide a name or two in isolation, one recent brief history

provides as a student exercise a stanza from a Middle English poem and directions to find evidence "that it was written in a Northern dialect"—all after a nine-page chapter on the whole of Middle English.[77] What is unfortunate about such materials is that they will prove unusable in most classrooms and discourage both teacher and student interest in the history of English. I do not think that a detailed introduction of Old and Middle English dialects into the secondary school can be justified on humanistic or any other grounds.

Very different from and far more interesting and fruitful than a presentation of the linguistic characteristics of early dialects is a discussion of how one Middle English dialect came to be the basis of Standard English. During the Middle Ages important literary works were written in all dialects, with each dialect naturally retaining its ascendency and prestige in its own area. But near the end of the period several forces began to make the dialect of the London area into a written and then later a spoken standard for the country, though of course other dialects continued, and in fact continue, to exist. Student conjecture should lead to the discovery of most of the causes for this development: the economic importance of London, the presence of the court there, the fact that the country around London was the most heavily populated in England, and the fact that the dialect in the Midlands was neither so conservative as that in the South nor so changing as that in the North. The effect of these forces is that "the history of Standard English is almost a history of London English."[78]

With the acceptance of a single regional dialect as the standard for the country came the development of class dialect. Professor G.L. Brook quotes a sixteenth century author who complained that nurses and other foolish women were corrupting the pronunciation of the sons of noblemen. He then comments that "we here have the beginnings of an attitude towards language which becomes increasingly important during the Modern English period: the recognition of the existence of dialects which owe their variation from each other primarily to social rather than to geographical causes."[79]

An easy jump from England to America is possible here. If social, cultural, and economic criteria determine which geographical dialect will become "standard," and if a speaker's nobility or lack of it determines his class dialect, what will happen in America, where democracy supposedly precludes such plutocratic or aristocratic determination? Professor Thomas Pyles concludes his eminently readable *Words and Ways of American*

English by referring to two sides of the American linguistic character, one of which is the "altogether pleasing American genius for word-making."

> But equally revealing of a quite different aspect of the national character is the willingness, even eagerness, which we have always shown in our surrender of small, individual liberties for the sake of an ideal—in this instance a potential linguistic equalitarianism similar to the potential opportunity of the humblest lad to sit in the seats of the mighty provided that he guides his career by the proper set of precepts.[80]

For the habits of the aristocratic, we have substituted a set of rules which can dignify the speech of anyone. The schoolmaster, sometimes with intelligent observations and sometimes with arbitrary assertions, has become a new force, a force felt across the country through textbooks. Students might very well consider whether this new force, which too often pays no heed to geographical or social dialects as they in reality exist, is a satisfactory or just one, whether it damages more than it aids, how it might be tempered, and how effective it is—according to their own observations. A complementary classroom exercise might include looking at old texts containing lists of usage rules or do's and don't's that supposedly demarcate proper speech, contrasting the old lists with statements from recent texts and dictionaries, and finally determining what is said in the students' dialect area. Relating the forces which make certain geographical and class dialects into national standards to the question of usage can result in an exciting, valuable, open-ended discussion.

Notes

1. Wayne Harsh et al., *New Approaches to Language and Composition: Book 8. Teacher's Guide*, p. T51.
2. J.N. Hook and Michael G. Crowell, *Modern English Grammar for Teachers*, pp. 3-15.
3. Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire, *Teaching Language and Literature*, pp. 78-83.
4. Edwin H. Sauer, "Education, Language, and Reality" (The Henry H. Brechbill Lectures presented at the University of Maryland, College Park, 1966). Another account of language study, again relying heavily on the history of English, can be found in chapter 2, "What is English?" of Sauer's *English in the Secondary School.*
5. William Chisholm, *The New English*, p. 17.
6. Ibid.
7. Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, p. 6.
8. Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 216. This intriguing book, as the subtitle states, is "A Survey of Opinions Concerning the

Vernacular from the Introduction of Printing to the Restoration," and a teacher can mine it effectively for much curious, attention-getting, and anecdotal information.

9. François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. Cohen, Book III, chapter 19, p. 339.
10. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, p. 207.
11. Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. Robertson, pp. 60-61.
12. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School*, pp. 15-16.
13. Harsh et al., *New Approaches to Language and Composition: Book 7*, p. 19.
14. Henry I. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 4. Teacher's Edition*, pp. 5-6.
15. Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar*, p. 7.
16. Michael G. Crowell, "American Traditions of Language Use: Their Relevance Today," *English Journal* (January 1970), p. 112.
17. Loban, Ryan, and Squire, *Teaching Language and Literature*, p. 18.
18. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 4. Teacher's Edition*, p. 3.
19. *Teaching the English Language in Wisconsin*, p. 75.
20. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 4*, p. 3.
21. Smalley, *The Bible in the Middle Ages*, p. 362.
22. Isidore Levine, Rinaldo C. Simonini, Jr., and Lionel R. Sharp, *English 11*, p. 265.
23. Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages," Supplement I, *The Meaning of Meaning*, Ogden and Richards, pp. 323-25.
24. Joseph H. Greenberg, *Essays in Linguistics*, p. 62.
25. Project English Curriculum Center, Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language: Material for Incorporation in Curricula of Grades 11 and 12*, p. 33.
26. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 6*, p. 3.
27. Jo Ann McCormack, *The Story of Our Language*, p. 14.
28. Albert Kitzhaber et al., *History of English, Parts 3 and 4. Student Version*, pp. 38-39. An interesting explanation of comparative linguistics and the reconstruction of Indo-European, with numerous examples and several profitable exercises, is the basis of chapter 3, "The PIE People," in *The Dynamics of Language II*, by Allan A. Glatthorn, Charles W. Kreidler, and Ernest J. Heiman.
29. Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language*, pp. 35-37.
30. Dorothy McCoy, "A Workable Nongraded Language Arts Program for Senior High Schools," *Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1968-69*, ed. Beeler and Emery, p. 111.
31. Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language*, pp. 33-34.
32. Thomas Pyles, *The English Language: A Brief History*, p. 7. The assignments were prepared by Jayne C. Harder.
33. *The Development of Modern English*, by Stuart Robertson and F.G. Cassidy, gives a brief history of writing, as does Ronald W. Langacker's *Language and Its Structure*. A fuller statement of the development of writing and English spelling is available in chapter 2 of Thomas Pyles' *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. A comprehensive statement of the development of writing is I.J. Gelb's *A Study of Writing*. The final chapter of this book raises a number of most interesting questions about the efficacy of various writing systems, questions which could form the basis of classroom discussion.
34. *Leaflets on Historical Linguistics*, prepared by the NCTE Commission on the English Language. A portfolio of six leaflets includes *Beowulf, The Peterborough Chronicle, Canterbury Tales*, the Prologue to *The Book of Eneydos*, the Second Quarto of *Hamlet*, and the *Epistle to Bathurst*. Similar but less fully developed materials are presented in *New Approaches to Language and Composition: Book 8*, by Harsh et al.
35. Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language*, pp. 58-89.
36. See chapter 8 in *The Science of Language*, by John P. Hughes.

37. Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language*, pp. 38-39.
38. Loban, Ryan, and Squire, *Teaching Language and Literature*, pp. 64-65. *Our Language Today 8*, by David A. Conlin, George R. Herman, and Jerome Martin, heads each chapter with a one-paragraph entry on the history of English, with references to social, political, and literary matters.
39. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School*, p. 27.
40. Charlton Laird provides a clear, brief statement in *Thinking about Language*, pp. 21-24.
41. Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language*, pp. 257-70. Baugh's pages on inkhornisms seem to be the basis of treatments of the subject in many other works.
42. Albert H. Marckwardt and Randolph Quirk, *A Common Language*, p. 44.
43. Helen Y. Hahn, "The Effect of Two World Wars upon Our Language," *We Speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels: Essays in the History of the English Language*, pp. 56-57.
44. Thomas Poplin, "Scientific, Technological, and Industrial Developments and the English Language," *We Speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels*, pp. 58-59; Dolores Landreman, "Engineers, Atomic Energy, and English," *English Journal* (March 1959), pp. 132-35; David A. Conlin and George R. Herman, *Modern Grammar and Composition 3*, pp. 420-21.
45. William Labov, "The Social Motivation of a Sound Change," *Word* (December 1963), pp. 273-309; as reprinted in *Readings for the History of the English Language*, ed. Scott and Erickson, p. 347.
46. Esther Hamon and Murray Bromberg, *Our American Language*, p. 26.
47. Center for Curriculum Development in English, University of Minnesota, *Unit 902: Changes in the Meanings of Words*, p. 10A.
48. Leonard H. Frey, *Readings in Early English Language History;* Anthony E. Farnham, *A Sourcebook in the History of English;* A.G. Rigg, *The English Language: A Historical Reader*.
49. Northern Illinois University, "The Development of the Grammatical Signals of Modern English," *History of the Language*, pp. 22-57.
50. Harsh et al., *New Approaches to Language and Composition: Book 8*, pp. 22-24.
51. Kitzhaber et al., *History of English, Parts 3 and 4. Student Version*, pp. 25-29.
52. Paul M. Postal, *Aspects of Phonological Theory*, p. 308.
53. Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language*, p. 31.
54. Harsh et al., *Language and Composition: Book 8*, p. 24.
55. Harold B. Allen et al., *New Dimensions in English*, p. 329.
56. *Beowulf, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and the Gettysburg Address*, read by Harry M. Ayres, is available from NCTE with copies of the explanations and text for *Beowulf* and Chaucer.
57. The teacher should examine both NCTE offerings and records from other sources. *The Sounds of Chaucer's English*, prepared by Daniel Knapp and Niel K. Snortum, contains 3 twelve-inch records which provide an analysis of sounds as well as readings. A text accompanies the set. I would expect the set to be more useful to the teacher who wants to perfect his pronunciation than to the student. Also available are J.B. Bessinger's readings of Old and Middle English—*Beowulf and Other Poetry in Old English, The Canterbury Tales General Prologue in Middle English,* and *Two Canterbury Tales in Middle English: The Miller's Tale and the Reeve's Tale.* These twelve-inch records are very good, although Bessinger reads rapidly and students will have to prepare the provided text well to follow him.
58. Harsh et al., *Language and Composition: Book 8*, p. 21.
59. Nebraska Curriculum Development Center, University of Nebraska, "The History of the English Language," *A Curriculum for English: Student Packet, Grade 8*, p. 17.

60. Kitzhaber et al., *History of English, Parts 3 and 4. Student Version*, p. 18, and Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language*, p. 12.
61. Kitzhaber et al., *History of English, Parts 3 and 4. Student Version*, p. 31.
62. High school teachers seem to find the following very useful: Stuart Robertson and F.G. Cassidy, *The Development of Modern English*; Thomas Pyles, *The Origins and Development of the English Language*; Henry Alexander, *The Story of Our Language*; Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*.
63. Thomas Clark Pollock and Richard L. Loughlin, *The Macmillan English Series 8*, p. 8.
64. University of Minnesota, *Unit 905: A Historical Study of the English Lexicon*, p. 39.
65. Pollock et al., *The Macmillan English Series 12*, pp. 27-28.
66. Jewell Kirby Fitzhugh, "Old English Survival in Mountain Speech," *English Journal* (November 1969), p. 1225.
67. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 3*, pp. 11-12.
68. University of Minnesota, *A Historical Study of the English Lexicon*, pp. 8-10. A half dozen other questions follow, leading to the conclusion that if we understand patterns and causes of change today, "we should be able to discover some of the same forces operating in the past."
69. Louis A Muinzer, "Historical Linguistics in the Classroom," *Illinois English Bulletin* (October 1960), pp. 19-25.
70. See *Changes in the Meanings of Words*, University of Minnesota; *Lexicography: History of English, Part 1. Student Version*, Kitzhaber et al., p. 22; *New Dimensions in English*, Allen et al., pp. 288-89.
71. Brian Foster, *The Changing English Language*, p. 149.
72. *Americans Speaking*, prepared by John Muri and Raven I. McDavid, Jr., is a twelve-inch LP with a pamphlet containing samples of speech from the Northern, Midland, and Southern areas. Introductory books available include *Dialects–USA*, by Jean Malmstrom and Annabel Ashley; *Dialects of American English*, by Carroll E. Reed; *American Dialects for English Teachers*, edited by A.L. Davis.
73. Pollock et al., *The Macmillan English Series 10* and *11*.
74. Marckwardt and Quirk, *A Common Language*.
75. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School*, p. 33.
76. Muinzer, "Geography and the American Language: An Approach to Literacy," *Harvard Educational Review* (Spring 1964), pp. 226-45.
77. Pyles, *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, p. 40.
78. Baugh, *A History of the English Language*, p. 234. Baugh's clear and interesting discussion of this matter could provide valuable materials for a history-minded student writing a paper on dialects and socioeconomic forces.
79. G.L. Brook, *A History of the English Language* p. 56.
80. Pyles, *Words and Ways of American English*, p. 292. This book, available as a paperback, illustrates and analyzes the forces affecting the growth of American English. It is a convenient and valuable source for the kind of interesting, persuasive, and anecdotal language information the high school teacher can employ with enthusiasm and success.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRUCTURING A UNIT ON THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

In *The Uses of English* Herbert J Muller observes that the love of American linguists "for systematic study may support an already excessive faith in program or system."[1] While Muller's statement is an observation on suggestions for some evidently sterile grammatical exercises, it contains a possible objection to a structured, detailed unit on the history of the language. On the other hand, Hook and Crowell assert that "a chronological or other systematized study of the English language from the standpoint of its history has both cultural and practical value. It is an indispensable ingredient of a well-balanced English program."[2] The teacher will of course have to decide for himself whether he wants to and can teach the material as a unit. In making his decision he would do well to consider the seven criteria for a good unit suggested by Richard S. Alm.[3] It seems to me that the history of English as a unit is more than justified by Alm's criteria, and that such a unit will be effective in the hands of any respectable teacher who does not reduce himself to reading someone else's curriculum guide to his class.

The nature of the unit is the teacher's choice. Donald A. Sanborn has argued that we cannot expect a teacher to master linguistics sufficiently to produce a thorough curriculum; specialists should develop the units, and a teacher should "participate, as a novice inquirer, in the presentation, demonstration, and individual investigation activities of the units she is to teach."[4] This would imply the use of a highly structured unit, perhaps from a curriculum guide. But a teacher may prefer a loosely structured unit, based on a few general principles or student interests. Whatever the case, I disagree with Sanborn, at least for the history of English, and believe rather that a teacher should ultimately create his own unit. Even

those preplanned units which are not weak imitations of a college course require that a teacher have an overview and deeper knowledge for classroom success, both of which he will automatically attain if he makes his own unit.

If a teacher creates his own unit, he will familiarize himself with the raw materials by handling them, and so gain the confidence which permits flexibility and ease of use in place of mere mechanical procedure. In addition, the teacher will get a better notion of what is appropriate and available for the grade level and ability of his class, what can be emphasized or de-emphasized to appeal to his students' interests, what amount of time to devote to the total unit and parts of it, what historical detail best illustrates the language principles he regards as most important for a high school student, and the like.

Preceding an outline of a careful and intelligent plan for language study developed by the University of Minnesota Curriculum Study Center, Hook and Crowell remark that "no singular curricular plan is superior to all others for the teaching and learning of the various components of a balanced language program."[5] Certainly so, excepting the individualized unit prepared by a sensitive teacher. When he looks at the following structures, the teacher should understand that they are not exclusive of one another, that various areas of content can be adjusted to the structures in different ways, and that his own reasons for introducing the subject into the classroom should help determine what content to mix with what structure.

Chronological Order

The structure for a unit most frequently found in publications of all kinds at all levels is the chronological one. Such a statement seems to be the easiest for most teachers to develop, perhaps because a majority of source books are set up chronologically or because their college courses were. Easiest for the teacher must not of course be equated with best for the student.

A typical outline follows:

1. Language (Introductory)
2. The Indo-European Family
3. Old English
4. Middle English
5. Early Modern English
6. The Eighteenth Century

7. Modern English
8. American English
9. The Future of English
10. Summary

Usually the teacher works through each topic completely before beginning the next. The outline may be the basis of a ten-day unit, either with a day for each topic or juggling so that one topic gets two days while another is omitted or paired up with a less important topic. Readings in a suitable text may accompany each day's topic,[6] and prose or poetic passages may be introduced to represent some or all of the historical periods.

A second kind of chronological unit treats a single aspect of language at a time, from Old English to Modern. The supposition behind such a unit is that a student will better understand and remember the development of a phase of English if he studies that phase in its entirety without distraction. The following example is of a five-day unit:

1. Introduction to Language Study
2. History of Sounds
3. History of Grammar
4. History of Vocabulary
5. Summary

During the discussion of each topic the teacher can refer to pertinent social, political, and cultural forces, and during the summary he can test and reinforce student knowledge by asking the class to generalize from the details presented. A different classroom technique can be introduced each day, both to illustrate a range of approaches to the subject and to avoid boredom with a sleepy group. The introduction can be a matter of free class discussion about anything to do with language. The History of Sounds can be illustrated with recordings and a teacher's own readings, followed by student imitation. The History of Grammar can be illustrated on the board by structural or transformational approaches where these are known, and otherwise by selected sentences revealing differences in word order and inflectional endings. The History of Vocabulary can be shown by presenting an Old English base and adding chronologically groups of words that can be associated with major forces influencing the language. During the Summary a tight question-answer approach can direct students to principles of language change and other concepts. Details of content and technique for such a unit might be like those suggested in the preceding chapter.

A teacher who wishes to prepare a chronological unit can begin efficiently with a college textbook which is set up chronologically, like Baugh's *A History of the English Language.*[7] A Wisconsin curriculum guide contains a six-page chronological history of English, with suggestions for projects and class discussions.[8] Two of the brief histories available for the classroom are of such a nature that the teacher should examine them closely to determine whether he might do better without them.[9] Chapters in high school texts vary in content, length, and detail, but if properly mined, they can help provide the basis for a chronological unit.[10]

Of course, either of these chronological structures or any other structure can be expanded if the teacher wishes to develop a longer unit. The expansion can be achieved first, rather formally, by the development of subtopics for each topic and of classroom exercises designed to reinforce the basic learning in the unit. For example, when treating the history of sounds in English, the teacher might supplement readings of Old and Middle English with readings in current British English, Scottish, and some American dialects. After each example of modern spoken English, students can observe major similarities and differences between it and Old or Middle English.

The expansion of a unit can be achieved rather informally by further attention at any time to what strikes a class's fancy. Since a teacher must inevitably omit much important and interesting material from any presentation of the history of the language, he might decide to develop what his students show greater interest in rather than determine himself what material should be discussed more fully. This places a greater burden on the teacher, of course. He must be able to supply quickly pertinent historical information if his students want to know just how many parts of speech in Old English did take inflectional endings or what a full set of endings looked like. And there is no reason that students should not ask such questions once in a while, especially if they believe that the reward of curiosity need not be followed by the punishment of a test.

In schools which offer a broad range of elective work in English, a teacher might use the structure of one of these units or some variation of it as the basis for an entire course. With sufficient time for expansion by the teacher in terms of the subject itself and expansion by the students according to their interests, the teacher can expect to reveal the potential of what in a brief presentation must remain a suggestion.

Reverse Chronological Order

Reverse chronological order as the basis of a unit is simply what it says:

1. Introduction to Language Study
2. Modern English
3. Middle English
4. Old English
5. Summary

The justification for reversing chronological order is that a student will better understand the unknown (earlier English) if he begins with an analysis of the known (Modern English). The following is from *Descriptive Essays by the Staff of the Oregon Curriculum Study Center:* ". . . the easy problems are always attacked first; thus for example the Early Modern English of Shakespeare is approached for study only after some fairly sound foundations in Modern American English have been laid down and certainly before Middle English is studied."[11]

Another reason for starting with Modern English is that a student, because he can begin to think of the principles of language from the beginning, will be able to appreciate more fully the past in relation to the present. In short, he will come to understand the history as pertinent background, rather than as a historical subject in a vacuum. A Minnesota curriculum guide gets the student thinking in this way: "Suppose someone pressed you and asked how you could possibly begin a historical study of the English language by looking at the language as it is now, how would you answer him. . . ?"[12] Answers should range from large questions about why we put words together as we do to queries about individual spellings or pronunciations or constructions which interest or trouble students.

Teachers should find the reverse chronological approach very efficient in certain overall plans for language study. A unit so structured, for example, could drop neatly in place and provide variety after a study or review of modern grammar (phonology, morphology, and syntax). Here a teacher with a good class can expect to use at least some of the analytical methods and terminology of modern grammar to add precision to the study of the background of English. The teacher should also be aware of the possibility of combining chronological and reverse chronological approaches: one might begin with Modern English and proceed backwards to Early Modern English (Shakespeare), and then jump to Old English and proceed forward to Shakespeare. In this way the student has the advantage of starting with the known, but can still study with continuity, for

example, the loss of inflectional endings from Old English to Middle English. Of course, such combinations and the jumping they require must be examined with reference to a particular class's ability to hold ideas in suspension.

Structuring by Theme or Principle

A chronological order comes to mind first for most of us when we hear the word *history*, but the history of English, like the history of English literature, can be approached thematically. In "Linguistic Marys, Linguistic Marthas: The Scope of Language Study," John Algeo discusses the "system of language" as "involving four general kinds of relationships that words have" and labels the studies of those relationships "syntactics," "semantics," "pragmatics," ("the multiple relationships between words and their users, specifically the origin, uses, and effects of language"), and "phonetics."[13] A teacher who creates a unit designed to illustrate these four studies–or any principles of language no matter how formulated–might draw materials from the entire range of the history of English and present them not chronologically, but as they relate to the large topics or their subtopics. In this case, continuity in the presentation of historical materials and processes, like inflectional leveling, might be sacrificed for the emphasis of principles founded firmly on the materials and processes. A more concrete basis for a unit by theme could be a division of language study like that outlined in one of the *Reports of the Yale Conferences on the Teaching of English:* grammar, usage, rhetoric, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capitalization, and semantics.[14] The history of the language, instead of being the eighth member of the group as it is in the report, would be used to help describe each of these studies, and in turn each study would present materials from the history of English.

The subject of language change might itself provide the structuring device a teacher is looking for, either for an entire unit or a portion of one. One curriculum guide presents the following outline for a review of lexical change, an outline which might easily be turned into a week-long unit:

A. Basic types of change
   - Borrowing
   - Shift in meaning
   - New words

B. Basic causes of change
   - Cultural contact
   - Sub-group interaction
   - Individual interaction

C. Summarize[15]

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A different analysis of change as the basis of language study is available in Louis A. Muinzer's "History: The Life in Language." Six statements made by Muinzer are a very natural base for a unit:

> Change is a fundamental characteristic of a living language.
> Any and in fact all facets of language change.
> Change in language begins with the linguistic activity of an individual.
> The inauguration of change by the individual may be stimulated by a number of forces.
> Once change has been inaugurated by an individual (or individuals spontaneously), it may pass through an ever-widening circle of dialect groups.
> The movement of innovations underlies the entire study of dialect.[16]

With the student contributing modern examples and the teacher historical ones, discussion of these topics will reveal a good deal about language history.

When presenting a unit based on principles of language change, a teacher may choose to provide in addition a chronological overview. An effective way to merge such an overview with the study of the principles might be the tracing of a group of Indo-European languages from their source to their present states. Students can look for reasons for major differences or similarities between languages or language groups, keeping in mind the effects of geographical separation and isolation, the contact of a group of speakers with a new culture, and the like. Analyzing historical materials in this way not only reinforces the principles being studied, but provides in-context examples which together help explain how a single parent language could split into the large number of Indo-European languages we now have.

Treatment of the history of English according to themes or principles is found in some high school texts. Each of the four texts in *The New Building Better English Series*, by John J. DeBoer and others, has an introductory chapter on some theme from the history of English, and breakdowns which include material on dictionary making, sounds and spellings, etc., are common. *The English Language: Senior Course*, by Louis Zahner and Arthur L. Mullin, contains separate sections on language origin and development which are reprints of parts of college texts. Whatever text or readings he chooses, the teacher who wants to structure a unit by themes or principle must consider the various possibilities for combining several areas of language study and must determine whether his

own students will be more at ease with a unit set up in a conventional, chronological way or with a more experimental and perhaps more demanding one which requires greater mental ability and student synthesis of materials.

Separating External from Internal History

A unit based on the division between external and internal history differs from a simple chronological unit in that it treats the forces which shape language separately from the actual changes in the language. Presumably there is always overlap. An Oregon curriculum guide for the history of Old and Middle English is set up as follows:

External History
Internal History
  The Spelling of Old and Middle English
  The Sounds of Old and Middle English
  The Grammar of Old and Middle English
  The Vocabulary of Old and Middle English[17]

But the possible variations in such a unit are great. After dealing with external history, a teacher might set up his materials for the internal history chronologically, or by theme or principle, or in reverse chronological order. The value of such a structure is that the external history acts as a general introduction to the subject, providing both an overview unencumbered by grammatical detail, for example, and a pattern against which more specialized study can be understood. Moreover, the pattern provided as an introduction is itself reinforced when the more detailed studies are fit into it, with the hoped-for result that the student will better understand and remember what is basic. Finally, the external history as introduction might effectively interest those students who would be uninspired by immediate contact with internal history.

A teacher wanting for his own study a fairly sophisticated book separating external and internal history might look at Robert A. Peters' *A Linguistic History of English.* The brief chapter on external history begins with prehistoric Britain and ends with American dialects. A simpler statement of both external and internal history is available in Chapter Three of W. Nelson Francis' *The English Language: An Introduction.* Despite the fact that this book is intended as a supplement for college composition courses, it seems to me a fine text to recommend to high school students who become interested in English language studies.

General Methods for Teaching a Unit on the History of English

Besides the specific suggestions for handling particular areas of content that were treated in the previous chapter, the teacher should consider questions of overall technique when planning a unit on language history. A primary question will be whether, or how much, to lecture. One of Dwight L. Burton's comments on teaching literature is appropriate here: ". . . to make the high school class a junior version of the university seminar disregards all the things that had to happen so that the seminar *was* a memorable experience."[18] To present a unit on the history of English as a watered-down college lecture course is to do a disservice to both material and students and is not justified by any structure the teacher might concoct. If a teacher does decide to lecture part of the time, he must limit himself with care, keeping in mind that this subject mishandled leads particularly easily to the teacher-dominated, student-rejected classroom. Finally, when using curriculum guides, a teacher should heed their warnings, especially when these guides state that they are meant to be suggestive only or that materials presented are source materials.[19]

The authors of *New Trends in the Teaching of English in the Secondary Schools* conclude a chapter entitled "Language and the New Method" by saying, "Language study is apt to become more inductive and descriptive, with emphasis on discovering what constitutes language, how it works, how it changes, and how it relates to the individual as he attempts to find and express meaning in his world."[20] The inductive technique and the larger goals stated here, when applied to the history of English, can lead to what is in the best sense a classroom experience: *an individual student's perception based on his personal analysis of material and formulation of principle, a perception aided by a teacher's questioning and direction giving but clearly the student's own property, a perception totally different in nature from the simple acquisition of knowledge, whether from a lecture, book, programmed teaching machine, or film.*

A teacher who begins with details and works towards classification and the establishment of principles lets his students discover an open-ended process: "Real induction requires generalization based on observation of only *some* members of a class. As such, an inductive conclusion never can be considered true beyond a doubt."[21] A student who understands this as he analyzes the history of the language is more likely to see the subject as alive rather than dead. He is also more likely to become a continuous and appreciative observer and historian of language himself–which is the best of all possible results of introducing the subject.

Classroom analysis can begin in a number of ways. Ellen A. Frogner has suggested that a questionnaire surveying attitudes about language, developed originally to elicit the opinions of linguists, be given to students, not to test them but to create interest and help focus views about various matters.[22] A number of the 100 questions asked should produce enough strong opinion and specific, conflicting examples from Modern English to permit the teacher to refer very naturally to earlier periods in the language, with student involvement up. Whatever the start, teacher flexibility is imperative. Experienced teachers know the value of Henry I. Christ's advice: "If you get a good lesson going in an unexpected but productive direction, put aside the original lesson plan. It will keep for another day."[23] Student interest is not nourished nearly so well by the vigorous imposition of someone else's plan, no matter how well devised, as by a teacher's willingness and ability to provide the right materials at the right moment for the student.

If students proceed to mix the history of English with any other studies, so much the better. Donald A. Sanborn, discussing major ideas in an English program, has written that "relevance is not so much the outcome of putting the major concerns of the subject in a wider context as it is putting them in a variety of different contexts."[24] Moreover, students who proceed to mix language matters with other English subjects may be moving toward the understanding of "the *integrated nature* of language, literature, and composition, written and oral," which, as Michael F. Shugrue has observed, fails to get emphasized in a common definition of what English is all about.[25]

Precisely because of the fullness of the subject, a teacher must be certain that, whatever the content and structure of the unit he creates, both he and his students have enough flexibility to enjoy the history of English.

Notes

1. Herbert J. Muller, *The Uses of English*, pp. 72-73.
2. J.N. Hook and Michael G. Crowell, *Modern English Grammar for Teachers*, p. 7.
3. Richard S. Alm, "What Is a Good Unit in English?" *English Journal* (September 1960), pp. 395-99.
4. Donald A. Sanborn, "What Can We Teach about Language?" *English Journal* (November 1969), p. 1213.
5. Hook and Crowell, *Grammar for Teachers*, p. 15.
6. For example, Appendix A in *Unit 905: A Historical Study of the English Lexicon*, Center for Curriculum Development in English, University of Minnesota, suggests readings from Charlton Laird's *The Miracle of Language*.

7. If the teacher prefers a chronological approach of the second kind, with each day devoted to a single aspect of the language from Old English to Modern English, he might look at George Philip Krapp's *Modern English: Its Growth and Present Use.*
8. *Teaching the English Language in Wisconsin*, pp. 126-33.
9. Jo Ann McCormack's *The Story of Our Language* may be adequate for certain junior high classes. Thomas Pyles' *The English Language: A Brief History* should be used only by a teacher who is well-grounded in the subject and ready to be eclectic.
10. The following contain useful materials, including discussion questions and topics for projects: John Ashmead, Rinaldo C. Simonini, Jr., and Lionel R. Sharp, *English 12;* Thomas Clark Pollock et al., *The Macmillan English Series 12;* Henry I. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 6;* Harold B. Allen et al., *New Dimensions in English.*
11. Albert Kitzhaber et al., *A Curriculum in English, Grades 7-12: Descriptive Essays by the Staff of the Oregon Curriculum Study Center,* p. 19. The teacher interested in such a structure might find useful Albert H. Marckwardt's *Introduction to the English Language.*
12. University of Minnesota, *Unit 1201: A Historical Study of English Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax,* p. 4.
13. John Algeo, "Linguistic Marys, Linguistic Marthas: The Scope of Language Study," *College English* (December 1969), p. 275.
14. Philip Burnham et al., "Some Definitions of Terms: Report of the Language Committee," *Essays on the Teaching of English: Reports of the Yale Conferences on the Teaching of English,* ed. Gordon and Noyes, p. 19.
15. University of Minnesota, Appendix A, *A Historical Study of the English Lexicon.*
16. Louis A. Muinzer, "History: The Life in Language," *Illinois English Bulletin* (May 1960), pp. 1-23.
17. Kitzhaber et al., *History of English, Parts 3 and 4. Student Version.*
18. Dwight L. Burton, "Literature and the Heightened Mind," *Educational Forum* (January 1957); as reprinted in *Teaching English in Today's High Schools,* ed. Burton and Simmons, p. 29.
19. See, for example, the Introduction to *Unit 1201: A Historical Study of English Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax,* University of Minnesota, and "The History of the English Language," Nebraska Curriculum Development Center, University of Nebraska, p. 1.
20. William H. Evans and Jerry L. Walker, *New Trends in the Teaching of English in the Secondary Schools,* p. 71. Such ideas turn up frequently in recent high school texts. In the teacher's guide to *The Uses of Language,* Neil Postman and Howard C. Damon list eight assumptions underlying their text, including "language is a process, not a terminal event" and "a major preoccupation of education must be with the processes of learning, rather than with the end results of these processes" (p. 7).
21. Morris M. Sanders, *Classroom Questions*, p. 102. This is a valuable little book, especially for the teacher of the English language who wants to think about setting up his materials for analysis rather than blocking them as information to be memorized.
22. Ellen A. Frogner, *Using the "Language Inquiry" as a Teaching Device.*
23. Christ, *Discovering Language: Book 1. Teacher's Manual*, p. 3.
24. Sanborn, "What Can We Teach about Language?" p. 1210.
25. Michael F. Shugrue, *English in a Decade of Change*, pp. 26-27. The italics are mine.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

This chapter is a supplement to, and not a replacement for, the preceding ones. It extends the use of the subject by subordinating content so that it acts mainly as a foil to enhance another study, though in the classroom the teacher can expect reciprocation—that is, that each study will benefit and be benefited by the other.

The basic relationship between language and literature is implied clearly in comments like "the essence of literature is delight in language,"[1] and often expressed in more detailed statements:

> Literature, then, is language that pleases, but pleases in a special way. A telegram announcing that you have won the Irish Sweepstakes may be delightful, but it is not literature. The pleasure that literature gives comes not from the message, content, or meaning, but from the way it is expressed. Language becomes literature when it is valued for its form apart from its message, when it is thought to be good for its own sake, when people read it just for the sake of reading it. Archibald MacLeish ended a poem called "Ars Poetica" with the sentence "A poem should not mean / But be." When our attention is directed to what language means, we are looking away from language to something outside it. In literature, on the other hand, attention is focused on the act of language itself. This is not to say that subject matter has no part whatever in literature, because some of the pleasure we get is due to the skillful way form embodies meaning. When an author's literary style—the way he uses sound patterns, words, and grammatical structures—is exactly appropriate to the thing he has to say, the reader takes delight in the skillful match. Even so, it is not the message that makes literature, but the play of language that gives it form.[2]

In fact the specific implications of language study for the reading of literature have not been very fully or concretely developed, though there is

much support for the theory that the study of language can improve the study of literature. Francis Christensen has explained the relationship in this way:

> Language is a code; the process of writing or speaking is encoding the message; the message, the product of this encoding, is the spoken utterance or the written piece, everything from the simplest to the most complex; hearing and reading are the process of decoding. In utilitarian writing we are interested primarily in the message; the code should be transparent. In fine writing—in literature, that is—we exploit the physical qualities of the code itself, the physical properties of language, to suggest more than can be uttered otherwise. In all these processes and states the constant element is the code, language—the words and the constructions they enter into. The way to start, at least, integrating the three areas is to remedy our neglect of the code.[3]

To establish a base for mixing linguistics and literature, Mary Columbro Rodgers has suggested the place of language study in the "multicomponent English curriculum" by providing a series of charts relating, for example, encoding, language grammars, language history, language geography, literary history, and literary analysis.[4]

The most obvious help the history of English can offer to the reader of literature is on the simple level of understanding what a text literally says. Even a general awareness of the changes in the history of English can cause a student to guess that a problem in reading a line of Chaucer may come from his understanding a Middle English word like *buxom* in its modern sense. Of course, as one's knowledge of the subject becomes more detailed, so does the aid it provides. A knowledge of the history of the language can also help correct notions about the influence of great literary figures on English. The phrase "Father of Our Language" suggests one view, while a study of the forces which shaped the language leads to a very different one. Professor Albert Marckwardt has written that "the preoccupation of the literary historian with a single outstanding literary figure tends to obscure the general development of the language along the lines of general social utility."[5] A knowledge of the history of English can also help a student understand that great literature can be written in any language; that contrary to what one educator believes, "our expression and our sanity" are *not* necessarily "the better" because English has lost adjectival endings;[6] that the excellence of the *Beowulf* poet is possible with and, in fact, lies in his manipulation of a language current for him, inflectional endings and all. If we wish our students to have more sophisticated

attitudes towards things literary, certainly we cannot afford to neglect the history of the language.

Regarding the work of curriculum centers, James Sledd has written, "It may not be a fair comment that the highest degree of integration in one of the most carefully integrated programs is achieved by the cunning scheme of teaching the history of English literature and the history of the English language in the same year."[7] As a matter of fact, the idea of concurrent presentation is not a bad one for setting up an environment in which the studies can be played off one another, though Sledd is right in implying that mere juxtaposition is not equal to integration. But the teacher need not be satisfied with mere juxtaposition. In an informative and suggestive statement describing the study of English in the twelfth grade in Portland, Oregon, high schools, Janice Schukart writes that students begin to learn the history of the language by studying the subject "up through the Middle Ages":

> Students are supplied with duplicated copies of Early and Middle English samples, as provided in our Guide, such as a page from the West Saxon Gospels, one from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a quotation from *Beowulf*, a page from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and another from the first folio edition of *Hamlet*. These, plus a tape recording of the selections, are intriguing to them and arouse much discussion and questioning and even attempts at oral reading.
>
> After this much development of the subject, I drop the concentrated study of the history of English and introduce Chaucer's Prologue, in the original form. As we study this work, there is constant emphasis on language—the differences in syntax, spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and "correctness." When I take up the study of *Hamlet*, I continue to pursue the study of language; and again I find opportunity to continue the study when we read a nineteenth-century novel. The syntax of Mr. Collins, in *Pride and Prejudice*, is highly amusing to the class, and they understand that it is the syntax, hence the language, that provokes the humor. There is throughout the year ample opportunity to refer to language, not only in the literature the students read but in the material they write.[8]

There may be several inherent advantages to teaching the development of the English language along with a survey of literature, though the real burden of exploiting the relation between the two studies will always be on the teacher. Dealing with the language of an earlier age just before the introduction of the major figure of that age allows the language study to focus on literature that is fresh, of immediate concern to the class, and

difficult enough to read so that practical help is appreciated. For the purpose of cultural understanding, the fact that each study complements the other means that students are less likely to see a former age in bits and pieces, mainly unrelated. To this end, high school texts surveying English literature usually contain brief explanations of earlier states of the language as part of the introductions to the different periods of literary history.[9]

The pairing of language and literature study can also result in a natural introduction to an area of language study that must be a concern of a sensitive reader: one curriculum guide suggests that the proper time to study dialects may be when a student is reading Twain.[10] The suggestion is a good one, for it could help a student understand one of an author's literary techniques, perhaps in terms of characterization, in relation to language in the real world, language in a real place at a real time. And when an author creates an artificial dialect for one of his characters, either to suggest artistically or to caricature what in fact is spoken, it is even more important that the reader understand the play with language in the context of real dialect studies if he is to appreciate fully the intended literary effects. The humor of many an ethnic tale depends upon the recognition of hyperbole in the presentation of the speech habits of an Italian, Pole, or Jew.

Another advantage to teaching the histories of language and literature together is that the periods of literary history as a group will become more firmly set in a student's mind if he can associate *Beowulf* with Old English or Chaucer with Middle English. Finally, in presenting the subjects together the teacher has a doubly rich body of material he can mine to appeal to the widest range possible of students. After all, if some students become interested in language after reading literature, others may very well become interested in literature after studying language.

Specific methods of relating the history of language and literature in the classroom need to be developed further. The details which follow are illustrative and suggestive; they represent initial experiment with rather than exploitation of the relation between the two studies. The details are sorted according to the appropriate periods of literary history but the teacher should notice that the concept or approach underlying the merging of the studies at any one point may be useful elsewhere, with different language materials or different literature.

Teaching Old English literature means teaching it in translation. In this case the translation is from poetry in a synthetic language to prose or

poetry in an analytic one. I have pointed out elsewhere that a teacher working with just a few lines of *Beowulf* in the original can make his students aware of how understanding the structure of a language can sometimes lead to a fuller appreciation of literary techniques found it it.[11] In translation, for example, a sentence from an Old English poem may possess a string of appositives (one immediately after the other) which strikes the modern reader as at least unnatural and perhaps absurd, like this concocted illustration: "The brave lord, ruler of men, defender of his land, killer of dragons, went with his sailors to the ship." But in the original these same appositives may not have been in a string (one immediately after the other), but interspersed throughout the sentence, acting artistically as intermittent amplifiers of the subject and creating a cumulative effect as the sentence continued: "The brave lord went, the ruler of men, with his sailors, the defender of his land, to the ship, the killer of dragons." The interspersing was possible in Old English poetry because each appositive was marked by an inflectional ending indicating its function (e.g., nominative singular), so that no matter what its *position* in the sentence, its *use* was clear. But English has lost most of its inflectional endings and to compensate permits less freedom in word order, with the result that a previously effective poetic technique can be awkward in a modernization. From such a point a teacher can proceed to a discussion of other striking characteristics of Old English poetry, like kennings, and whether they are in any way explained by reference to the nature of the language.

More has been done with Middle English in the classroom than with Old English, as one would expect, since students today still often read at least Chaucer's *General Prologue* in the original. Some study of the history of English should keep the situation as it is, and may in fact increase the amount of Chaucer read in the original. Without language work, the tedium of translating competes too strongly with the pleasure of the poetry, and a decrease in reading Middle English will undoubtedly occur. With language work, the actual labor of glossary hunting may not decrease, but the rewards of the hunt can grow: besides allowing the student to read a line, looking up a word will always add an additional bit to his knowledge of vocabulary development; it may produce an interesting example of semantic change and so a basis for speculation about how the change occurred; and occasionally it will reveal curious or anecdotal facts which can be a delight in the classroom. When he lacks preparatory language work, the student cannot be expected to realize the side benefits and extra pleasures that should accompany his reading.

Commonly, introductions to Chaucer touch upon his language. A teacher can supplement what is in the text by producing his own mimeographed list of illustrative details, as a prologue to the *Prologue;* class discussion can show the student what he should observe as he reads. "His hors were goode. . ." (*General Prologue*, 1. 74) contains a plural, *hors,* which in Middle English was like the plural *deer*. But *horse* developed by analogy a "regular" plural, one adding "s," in the same way that *deers* gets produced by children. Guesses about why only one of the words developed a regular plural are appropriate here. *Goode* bears a remnant of the Old English inflectional system in its "e" and illustrates well the transitional nature of Middle English. The teacher can also call attention to Chaucer's use of doublets like *swinken* and *laboure* (*General Prologue*, 1. 186) "to heighten or strengthen the effect of the style."[12] Rhetorical technique has here developed in a most interesting way from an earlier, more practical state of affairs in which the English word of a doublet served to translate the French borrowing. In stressing that readers of poetry "must consciously attend to the sensory characters of the words,"[13] the teacher can illustrate simple details of pronunciation, like Chaucer's rhyming of words that no longer rhyme (*breeth* and *heeth*, *General Prologue*, 11. 5-6) or his variable stressing of certain words,[14] as well as more particularly poetic matters, like the sound effects in Middle English of the Friar who *lisped* "To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge" (*General Prologue*, 11. 264-65).

While examining a passage from Chaucer, students might contrast the Middle English with a translation, noting differences in word order and endings,[15] and going on to discuss the different literary effects. Students can also consider the quantity of French words they find in Chaucer along with F.N. Robinson's statement that Chaucer "appears to have added few words to the English vocabulary."[16] To stress the poet's own awareness of language problems in his time, a teacher can reproduce one of the final stanzas of *Troilus and Criseyde* (Book V, 1793-99), in which Chaucer prays that his work will not be misunderstood or mismetered because of the "gret diversite / In Englissh and in writying of oure tonge."

A common exercise for the individual student asks him to write a portrait like those in the *General Prologue*, though in Modern English and perhaps of a modern figure. Here a student might want to experiment with archaisms, imitate Chaucer's use of doublets or manner of phrasing, and in general play with his language. Students might also examine short lists of selected words from Chaucer, to observe semantic change.[17] Or they

might make their own short lists of words which interest them, writing comments on how the words have changed and how and to what effect Chaucer uses them. While such specific assignments can be geared to the ability and interests of a student, unqualified ones like "have pupils investigate the influences of Chaucer on the English Language"[18] are probably ill-advised.

Most of the language activities discussed in relation to Chaucer have been employed for the study of Shakespeare. Adaptation is usually as easy as switching details. A teacher might draw attention to problems with an anecdote: " 'How come Brutus calls his little serving boy a knave?' asked Jim. 'He seems to be fond of him.' "[19] He can follow through with illustrative examples, like the history of the meaning of *nice*,[20] or with an exercise in which students are given a brief list of words found in both Shakespeare and Modern English—though with different meanings—and are asked to guess at their earlier meanings with the help of a list of assorted answers.[21] Emphasizing basic matters is perhaps more important when dealing with Shakespeare than with Chaucer because of the greater tendency of students to look at a text in Early Modern English "as though written in their own language. But the change of language is continuous, if not steady, and a linguistic misjudgement here too is a risk of literary misjudgement."[22]

While discussing a play a teacher may want to integrate language materials like those in Otto Jespersen's very helpful chapter, "Shakespeare and the Language of Poetry."[23] Or he may want to select details from W.F. Bolton's chapter on "Late Modern English," like "the apparent nuances of difference" in Hamlet's addressing his mother as "you" and her addressing him as "thou"; "in these instances, the nuance is no longer available within the grammar of English."[24] Certainly some students might be interested in studying the syntax of Shakespeare,[25] and all should be aware that "sometimes the surface changes seem much greater than the changes in the grammatical system responsible for them: Elizabethan *Know you not. . .* ? and present-day *Don't you know. . .* ? seem more different than they really are. On the other hand, sometimes a superficial similarity hides a deeper change."[26]

Besides examining lists of rhymed words or contrasting an original passage with a translated one, students might enjoy talking about how a great reputation expands itself, as when verbal innovations are carelessly attributed to Shakespeare.[27] The magical power associated with words is always interesting: "In *Hamlet*, for example, the ghost of Hamlet's father

fails to respond to those who do not know the 'proper' way to address ghosts."[28] Students who enjoy playing with language will enjoy Shakespeare's puns,[29] and a teacher discussing punning has a perfect opportunity to reflect on the necessity for reconstructing past sounds and reading poetry aloud. Good students should be able to discuss the implications for language change of Bolton's comment:

> By the end of the sixteenth century the transition from medieval to modern English was substantially complete in the literary dialect, a dialect which had assumed an identity and a role of its own. Henceforth the influence of the spoken language on the written would no longer be a one-way matter, and forms of mainly literary origin would increasingly influence those of everyday speech.[30]

As a teacher develops for himself a body of material from the history of English and begins to use it when talking about literature, whether old or modern, he will experience a snowball effect. All at once further illustrations of a principle he is interested in will leap from the page of a work, serving to increase both his knowledge of the history of English and his and so his students' appreciation of literature.

Wordplay, for example, is still fun and evidently profitable in Modern English, and teachers frequently have students bring in and discuss samples of it: the State of Tennessee is trying to attract business by advertising in large letters "More dammed water than you'll ever use" and suggesting in smaller type that business should "find out what a blessing dammed water can be." With reference to the history of English, a teacher can reveal Joyce's "starved on a crosstree"[31] as a more complex and more interesting play with words: not only is *starved* used with its earlier meaning "to die," but it is appropriately accompanied by the suggestive compound *crosstree*, all of which is a deliberate archaism designed to be pleasurable. A little knowledge of sound change and dialectical differences will allow a Midwestern teacher to guess at the pun concluding the humorous/philosophical disquisition on chickens in *The House of the Seven Gables*: "We linger too long, no doubt, beside this paltry rivulet of life. . . ."[32] A pun lover might assert that, for such a pun, Hawthorne wrote the whole disquisition. The same knowledge should permit a teacher to explain not only why Peleg in *Moby Dick* calls Queequeg "Quohog,"[33] but what the implications of the mistake are for the characterization of Peleg. And certainly for teaching *Tom Jones* or any of Dickens or most contemporary novels, whether the scene is a black ghetto or the borscht belt, some knowledge of dialects and the social forces which can influence language is necessary.

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If his students are to understand literature as language instead of simple plot and consequently derive further pleasure from it, the teacher must be able to demonstrate again and again in the classroom that attention to a variety of linguistic detail, reading aloud, and slowing down to catch and examine wordplay are rewarding. The history of English provides a solid block of material for him to start with.

Notes

1. Edwin H. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School*, p. 3.
2. Thomas Pyles and John Algeo, *English: An Introduction to Language*, p. 239. Used by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
3. Francis Christensen, "The Child's Right to a Teacher Who Knows," *The English Language in the School Program*, ed. Hogan, pp. 277-78.
4. Mary Columbro Rodgers, *New Design in the Teaching of English*, chapter 5.
5. Albert H. Marckwardt, *Linguistics and the Teaching of English*, p. 105.
6. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School*, p. 14.
7. James Sledd, "Schoolroom Linguistics: The Hazardous Transformation," *California English Journal* (Spring 1967); as reprinted in *College and University Bulletin of the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English* (October 1967), pp. 10-11.
8. Janice Schukart, "English Language Study in Portland High Schools," by Matthews et al., *English Journal* (May 1963), p. 44.
9. A teacher may want to glance at the language materials in the following, remembering that these are literary texts: David Daiches et al., *English Literature*; G. Armour Craig et al., *English Literature*; Robert C. Pooley et al., *England in Literature*.
10. Albert Kitzhaber et al., *A Curriculum in English, Grades 7-12: Descriptive Essays by the Staff of the Oregon Curriculum Study Center*, p. 19.
11. Joseph E. Milosh, Jr., "A Supplement for Teaching *Beowulf*," *English Journal* (May 1970), pp. 646-54.
12. Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, p. 100.
13. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, p. 210. Especially today the teacher must demonstrate the sound effects of poetry, for we are a nation of silent readers. In the Middle Ages Chaucer's work would often have been read aloud to an audience.
14. Jespersen, *Growth and Structure*, p. 108.
15. Project English Curriculum Center, Northern Illinois University, *History of the Language: Material for Incorporation in Curricula of Grades 11 and 12*, p. 52.
16. F.N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. xxx.
17. Daiches et al., *Teacher's Handbook for English Literature*, p. 23. The list here concentrates on words which have acquired pejorative connotations, like *churl* and *hussy*.
18. David A. Conlin, George R. Herman, and Jerome Martin, *Our Language Today 8*, p. 41.
19. Edith E. Shepherd, "Building a Background for Understanding Our Language," *English Journal* (November 1951), p. 449.
20. See Albert C. Baugh, "Historical Linguistics and the Teacher of English," *College English* (November 1962), pp. 106-10.
21. Henry I. Christ and Jerome Carlin, *Discovering Language: Book 2*, pp. 8-9.
22. W.F. Bolton, *A Short History of Literary English*, p. 24.

23. Jespersen, *Growth and Structure,* chapter 10.
24. Bolton, *History of Literary English,* chapter 4.
25. Johanne E. McMahon, "English Language Study in Portland High Schools," by Matthews et al., *English Journal* (May 1963), p. 40.
26. H.A. Gleason, Jr., "Language–A Base for the Liberal Arts," *The Shape of English: NCTE Distinguished Lectures,* p. 35.
27. Marckwardt, *Linguistics and the Teaching of English,* pp. 105-6.
28. Neil Postman and Howard C. Damon, *Language and Systems,* p. 14.
29. An explanation of puns with examples from Shakespeare is available in *History of English, Part 2. Student Version,* by Kitzhaber et al., p. 19.
30. Bolton, *History of Literary English,* p. 23.
31. James Joyce, *Ulysses,* p. 197.
32. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables,* p. 133.
33. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick,* p. 84.

CHAPTER SIX

FOR THE TEACHER AND THE FUTURE

The teacher who has begun to master the content of the history of English and recognize the variety of its uses in the classroom has started well. Continuing well is first a matter of enlarging his knowledge. Once an initial understanding of a subject like the history of English has been attained, like the understanding necessary to construct a unit, real increase results from even minimal attention to common sources of language materials: literature, dictionaries, commercial and political writing of all kinds, the classroom itself. The teacher should be constantly building a body of language material that he is comfortable with and enthusiastic about, that works efficiently because it pleases and teaches, and that expands his perceptions as a historian of language. At its best such a knowledge will represent the entire subject justly but still be as personalized as a teacher's distinctive classroom habits.

Interesting information about select English words, for example, can be gathered from the specialized dictionaries and popular books available in most high school libraries. *A Dictionary of Americanisms* makes most revealing reading, for its dated quotations provide curious bits of American history and early humor (see "Gerrymander") as well as bits of Indian lore (see "Chunky").[1] *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* defines "Friday face" as "a glum, depressed-looking face or person," from the time when Friday was a day of fasting.[2] Nowadays, with the five-day work week and both fasting and abstaining all but forgotten, Friday can be a day of joy: some bars celebrate by selling TGIF (Thank God It's Friday) cocktails two for the price of one, from noon on. Slang used in other parts of the English-speaking world (like the Canadian "rink rat" for "a boy or young man who helps with the chores around a hockey rink, often in return for free skating, free admission to hockey games, etc.") can be

especially intriguing where it is not prevalent.[3] John F. Hanson has observed that in the Los Angeles area "flatlander" is used with a pejorative connotation by the "beach people" for the "intruders," the latter defined as those who come from more than four blocks away from the ocean.[4] Such a twist should amuse Midwesterners. Tidbits and curiosities, no matter what their source, can periodically refresh students, increase their delight in language, and encourage them to observe and investigate on their own.

With an increase in knowledge will come a greater flexibility in the teacher's presentation of the history of the language. It is undoubtedly true that "university specialists in many discrete disciplines are eager for new insights into language to be translated into classroom practice,"[5] but it is equally true that the burden for translation is on the teacher: the teacher must understand "that the ultimate curriculum decision about what *actually functions* with particular students is his, and that it is his responsibility to shape the discipline [linguistics] to the needs of particular individuals, without destroying its integrity."[6] Only a flexibility based on understanding will allow a teacher to accept this responsibility and make simple changes intelligently in the common arrangements of units or in the exercises and discussions used, for example, to reinforce a principle like language change.

Dictionary making is a good case in point. Many teachers have found that letting their students construct a brief dictionary, perhaps a class collection of slang, pays off in several ways. Students as lexicographers learn to form or qualify definitions from different contexts, to appreciate some of the difficulties in defining and labeling, and often to observe semantic change. Where to place such an exercise in the study of English is the question. It could very well precede the history of English, as an appetizer designed to create curiosity by analyzing words and special meanings the student already knows and enjoys. It could follow the history of English as practice in tying together preceding word studies, in examining semantic change, and the like. Or dictionary making might be related to a study of modern dictionaries and how to use them, with some attention to the conflict over *Webster's Third New International.*[7] Or it might be a class project concurrent with a chronological study of literature: a number of words having one meaning in Chaucer or Shakespeare and a different one in modern English might be collected and then given definitions, with supporting quotations and dates. For a particular class, depending upon its abilities and interests, the proper

placement of dictionary-making could be crucial for the success both of the exercise and of what it is to introduce, conclude, or comment on. It is the teacher who is as secure in his knowledge of the subject as he is of his class that can decide wisely what to employ and when and how to employ it.

Developing with a teacher's increased knowledge of the history of English and his flexibility in presenting the subject should be the spontaneous use of it in the classroom. Wherever it can elucidate any question in English studies, whether of grammar, usage, spelling, or mechanics–and especially when the question has been raised by a student–the history of English is particularly effective for providing additional material for analysis, keeping student interest up, and flattering youthful inquisitiveness. Such use presumes that the teacher wants to exploit what Professor Pooley has called the "natural settings for language" which arise, unplanned, in the classroom[8] and that he can without hesitation employ historical details to illustrate fundamentals "closely related to the more conventional work of the class."[9]

While the spontaneous use of materials from the history of English certainly depends on the teacher's mastery of selected detail, it is not limited to that detail. Source books which the teacher knows and has available in the classroom will provide abundant information quickly and so extend the range of facts he can work with. Students are always interested in their own names and friends' names, and can easily become interested in place names, the names of characters in literature, and the like. A book like *The Origin of English Surnames,* with a convenient index, can reveal that "Milner," "Millward," "Millard," and "Mellard" are variants of "Miller," going back to the time when "the miller was commonly one of the most considerable men of the village."[10] A study of place names and other American names of all sorts, like that in Chapter Ten of H.L. Mencken's *The American Language,* will provide not only pertinent background information, but also observations which students will delight to hear and to illustrate: "The developers of suburbs in low, marshy places have a great liking for adding ***heights*** to their names."[11] With the use of source books in the class to answer a question, provoke a response, or enrich a commentary, the teacher continues the study of the history of English beyond his own knowledge and in the best of all possible ways: by integrating it into English studies generally. When students respond to the material introduced positively, by making a generalization or adding an illustrative detail or simply wanting to hear

more, they are acting as historians of the language themselves, whether consciously or not. In this way, the study of language history never ends.

When the well-informed teacher is flexible, spontaneous, and comfortable in his use of the history of English, it is time for him to consider whether he can help out his fellow men. More classroom activities need to be developed stressing analysis and synthesis, in part to replace the ubiquitous exercises calling for—and often no more profound than—mere page flipping or dictionary hunting to fill in blanks or charts. New tests need to be developed as well: not simply more tests of factual information or terminology or even a knowledge of principles formulated by someone else, but tests to determine a student's ability to put several historical details together to arrive at a generalization, tests to determine whether attitudes about usage change after a study of the development of the English vocabulary or whether prejudice and provincialism decrease in any way after a study of dialects. More books need to be written which are not watered-down versions of college texts, but clear presentations of the subject with a recognition of the natural interests of high school students. Even if the teacher never does more than think about such tasks, he, at least, will be the richer for it.

Notes

1. Mitford M. Mathews, ed., *A Dictionary of Americanisms.* Teachers should watch for the appearance of another valuable source book: *Dictionary of American Regional English,* now being edited by Frederic G. Cassidy at the University of Wisconsin, will be a full collection of words and expressions that Americans use in different ways in different parts of the country. Material has already been collected from both printed sources and actual speech, in the latter case by field workers who camped their way through the countryside in "Word Wagons" (panel trucks) collecting data and tape-recording talk.
2. Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional Language.*
3. Walter S. Avis, "English in Canada," *Looking at Language: Essays in Introductory Linguistics,* ed. Scargill and Penner, p. 84. The teacher will find much useful material set down in various ways in the following books: James Bradstreet Greenough and George Lyman Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech;* Joseph T. Shipley, *Dictionary of Word Origins;* Wilfred Funk, *Word Origins and Their Romantic Stories.*
4. John F. Hanson, in a personal communication (July 4, 1971). Mr. Hanson also points out that *stoned* is no longer used to mean alcoholic overindulgence around Los Angeles, since the word has become associated with drugs. Teachers will usually find that students are very willing to explain what is happening to such words in their own dialect area.
5. Janet A. Emig et al., eds., *Language and Learning,* p. v.
6. Mary Columbro Rodgers, *New Design in the Teaching of English,* p. 121.

7. Casebooks on dictionaries and the controversy over *Webster's Third* provide interesting selected sources for class study: Jack C. Gray, ed., *Words, Words, and Words about Dictionaries;* James Sledd and Wilma R. Ebbitt, eds., *Dictionaries and That Dictionary.*

8. Robert C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage,* p. 206.

9. Louis A. Muinzer, "Historical Linguistics in the Classroom," *Illinois English Bulletin* (October 1960), p. 3.

10. P.H. Reaney, *The Origin of English Surnames.* The teacher should find equally useful the *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names,* compiled by E.G. Withycombe. The book has a fascinating introduction which includes such topics as the history of naming and the relationship of naming to cultural changes. Three books by Ernest Weekley contain much material: *The Romance of Names; Surnames; Words and Names.*

11. H.L. Mencken, *The American Language,* abridged by McDavid, p. 669.

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